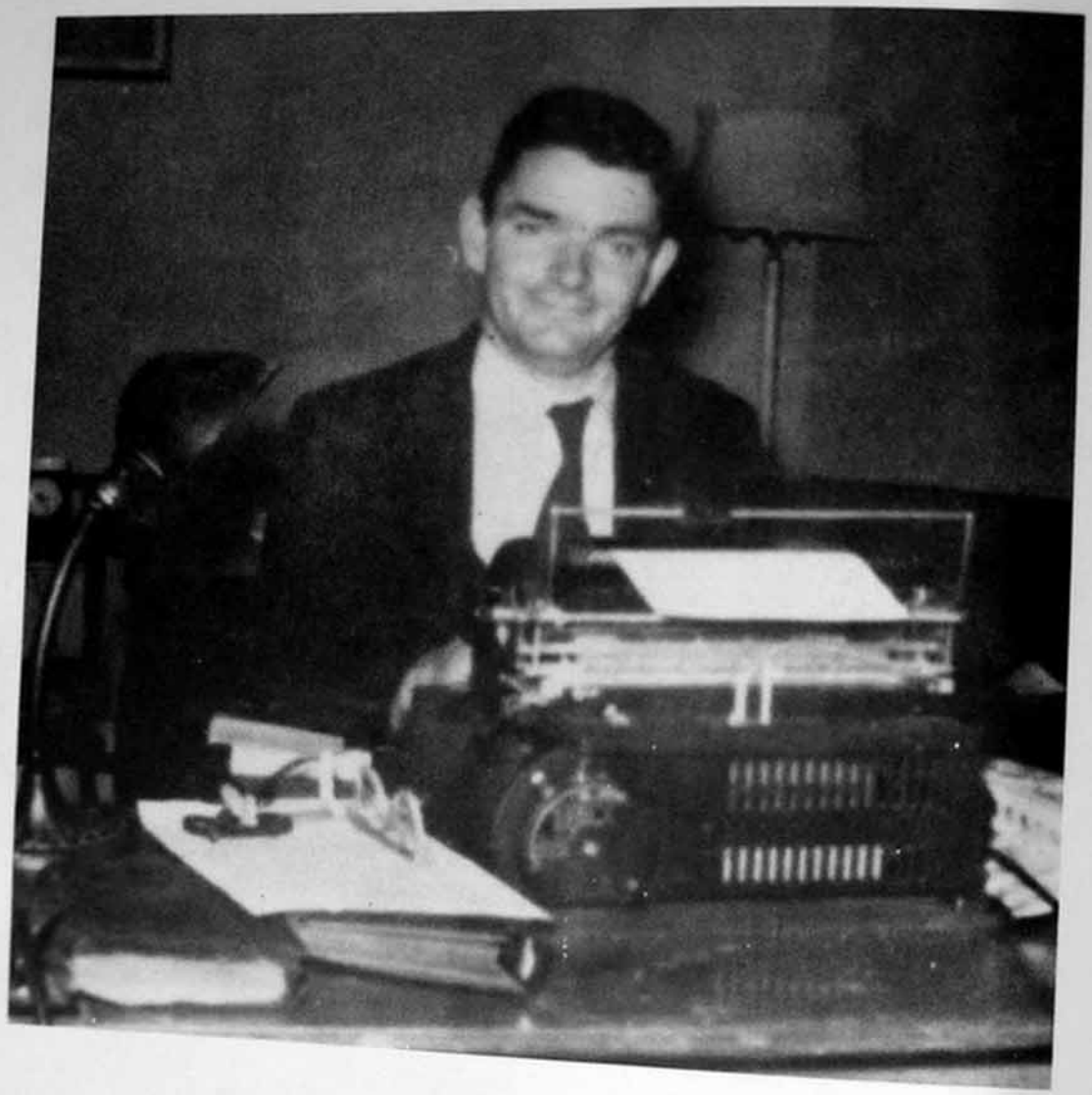
The LIFE STORY OF CHUCK ALDERMAN

"I have endured three handicaps, but I have lived a full life."

Chuck



This photograph was taken when Chuck was a sports reporter and a feature writer for The Spencer Needle and The Chemung Valley Reporter, 1956 to 1973.

I became a citizen of this world in the wee hours of the morning on Saturday, March 2, 1929. I was the second child born to Lawrence and Madge Ramsey Alderman. My arrival occurred in my grandmother's home in a rural area near Huntersville, West Virginia.

My grandmother's home, a nineteenth century plank house, was situated in a mountainous region of West Virginia. Nothing but hills and mountains surrounded the picturesque farm house, with the Beaver Lick Mountains in the back of the house and the Buckley Mountains in the front.

The nearest doctor's office was about ten miles away. Back in those days that was quite a distance to travel, so there was no doctor in attendance at my birth. There was, however, a midwife along with 'Granny' Ramsey.

I have been told that I was a normal baby with no apparent birth defects. There was nothing unusual at birth which would indicate that I would be a handicapped child.

When I was two weeks old, something occurred which may very well have been the beginning of my lifelong problem. One day my Aunt Hollie Perkins was visiting my mother. During her visit, I appeared to faint and turn blue. My mother and aunt became quite concerned. In fact my mother thought I was dying. Aunt Hollie began massaging and rubbing my body until the normal color returned. Since cerebral palsy usually occurs before, during or shortly after birth, perhaps the fainting spell was the beginning of my physical disability.

Except for the fact that I did not crawl or talk as quickly or as plainly as children my age should, Mother and Dad thought that I was just slow in mastering these skills.

My brother is twenty-two months older than I and my sister was born a little more than thirteen months after I was, so Mother was kept quite busy being a wife, mother and homemaker. Dad was a rural mail carrier, and his job was a blessing since during the depression years when many people were out of work and going hungry, we did not experience that fate.

When I was about two years old, my parents realized that something was wrong with me. I could not crawl, sit or stand without assistance and my speech was slower than most children of that age.

All of the first doctors to whom my parents took me to be examined were 'country' family doctors who had received their medical training late in the nineteenth century or in the early years of this century, when very little was known about cerebral palsy. With all due respect to those doctors, I am quite certain that they knew nothing about my condition.

The first doctors to whom I was taken all had their own names for my condition, and remedies for its cure. Two of the names assigned to my condition were infantile paralysis and rickets. Cod liver oil and Eagle Brand milk, a very rich canned milk, were two items which the doctors recommended, and I am told that these were added to my daily diet. While the two 'remedies' did nothing to better my physical condition, they probably were a big help in preventing me from becoming a weak, sick youngster. I have, fortunately, been quite healthy all of my life.

Like everyone else during the depression years of the thirties, my parents could not afford to take me to a doctor who specialized in treating patients with my condition, so we had to rely on the State to give us assistance in this area.

Before ever being seen by a doctor who had any knowledge of my condition, my mother and father were told by some country people who were working in the local State Assistance Office that it was useless to seek medical help for me. They said that I could not be helped physically and that I was mentally retarded. Father and Mother would not accept that verdict, and they insisted that I be seen by an orthopedic doctor. After many disappointing and frustrating experiences, arrangements were made to have me examined by a doctor in Huntington, West Virginia.

It was a warm Sunday morning in July of 1935 when a neighbor drove Dad and me the two-hundred mile trip to Huntington to see Dr. Jones, an orthopedic specialist, for the first time. It was a pleasant ride down to Huntington, with plenty of room in the 1929 Ford. Little did we realize how crowded that same automobile would seem and how much misery Dad and I would go through on our return trip that same night.

Following a routine examination, Dr. Jones suggested that I be admitted to the Children's Hospital for a short stay. It was my first time away from home and I did not want to stay at the hospital, so Dad asked if he could take me home with him. Dr. Jones agreed to Dad's suggestion, but stated that a cast would have to be put on my legs before we left the hospital.

I was taken to a room where Dr. Jones, a nurse, a couple of attendants and Dad struggled for quite a while to enclose most of my lower body in a snow white plaster cast. The cast included a bar between my legs which added to the woes of moving me about and to my discomfort.

After letting the plaster dry, we began our return trip home. I was unable to sit up because of the cast and was forced to lie stretched out on my back on the back seat of the car for the entire journey. Dad was pretty worn out by the time we arrived home about 5:00 a.m. the following morning. He had ridden

most of the two-hundred miles sitting on the floor of the back seat so that he could adjust my position whenever necessary. It was a long, hard trip, but it was just the beginning of six long, hard, hot weeks of suffering and torment for me.

The cast which had been applied that July Sunday was for the purpose of straightening muscles in my legs that had never been straight before in my six years of life. It extended from just above my waist to my toes. During the entire six week time period, I was able to be in only two positions, lying down or on my feet with someone holding me up. I could stand alone inside the house by holding onto something stable, such as a bed or a big chair. Outside I could hold on to the porch railing or the fence. Since I obviously could not wear ordinary clothing, I had a long coat-style gown which served the purpose, but it was far from the typical attire of a six year old.

Because of me, the family was not able to do much visiting that summer. The cast was too bulky and heavy to make traveling in the automobile comfortable or enjoyable. As I understand things now and remember back to those days so many years ago, I realize the sacrifices my mother, father and siblings made in their lives because of me.

The six weeks I wore the cast were, for the most part, weeks of discomfort and suffering for me and a period of heartbreak and agony for my parents. My legs hurt for the entire month and a half I was forced to wear the cast. The pain was caused by the tight muscles in my legs being stretched and because I was not able to relax these muscles as other people were. The cast did not fit properly, which caused it to rub pressure sores on my heels, from which I also suffered considerable discomfort. My real discomfort, however, came at night when the backs of my legs and my heels would ache and I would not sleep until the wee hours of the morning. Many nights that summer, our neighbors, who lived about a half mile from our house, could hear me crying and screaming with the pain. Elevating my legs was one of the few things which relieved my pain. There were times when there were as many as five or six pillows placed under my legs in an effort to give me relief.

The intense heat of those July and August days and nights added to my troubles. I could not be bathed below the waist for fear of getting the cast wet and thus weakening its structure.

Somehow the days and weeks did pass and the time finally arrived for me to return to Huntington to have the cast removed. I am glad that the medical profession has now discovered other methods of stretching muscles so that others will not have to suffer as I did.

Near the end of the six week period of wearing the cast, I began to count the days until it would be removed. As much as I wanted to be free from the

misery I was experiencing, a new and somewhat different fear began to grip me. I began to fear what would happen when my legs would finally be released from their coat of hard plaster. Would they suddenly draw up into the position they assumed before I was placed in the cast? Would the pain be greater than that which I was presently experiencing?

At last the day arrived when I had to return to the hospital to have the cast removed. Before leaving home this time, I knew that I had to spend a few days at the hospital to give the staff there time to adjust the braces which I was to wear continuously after the cast was removed. Two days after I entered the hospital I was taken to a room near the operating room to have the cast cut off.

The attendant removed the cast by cutting it at different angles with a pair of shears which resembled wire cutters and an electric handsaw. The man tried to be careful not to hurt me, but in spite of that, he did nick me in a few places on my legs with the saw.

When the cast was finally removed, I was surprised to discover that my legs did not draw up suddenly as I had fearfully expected them to do. In fact, I discovered that I could not bend them myself at all. The muscles had become so stiff that my legs had to be exercised daily for the next several weeks before I would be able to bend them at all.

After the cast was removed, I was given a much needed and very refreshing bath. It was such a relief to shed the cast and get into a tub of warm water to rid myself of the body odor which had plagued everyone for so long. I was then wheeled on a gurney into a room where I was to have my first look at and receive my first braces. These were made out of steel, leather and buckles. They fit my legs tightly with bands around each thigh and calf and around my waist. Joints had been located at the knees and hips of the braces so that my legs could be kept straight by 'locking' the joints. Unlike the cast, the braces could be removed at any time.

The biggest problem with the braces was that they, like the cast, did not fit properly in certain places on my legs and feet. Cotton and other soft material was used at these points to prevent pressure sores from occurring.

The doctor advised my parents to make certain that I wore the braces both day and night with the knee joints 'locked' to keep my legs straight.

I had to adjust to this new type of harness, as it is sometimes called, but it was much easier to endure and a great deal more comfortable than the cast. In time I got used to the braces and really did not mind them too much.

It was several weeks after the cast was removed before my misery was completely over and my fears disappeared. My legs were stiff and the doctors said that the only way to get the muscles loose so that my legs would bend was to bathe them in very warm water and exercise them every day. It was a heart breaking experience, I am sure, for Mother and Dad to forcefully exercise my legs and bend my knees, hips and ankles every day. It normally took about an hour each time to complete the task.

At first the pain was almost unbearable, and I would plead with Mother and Dad to stop the exercises. I would even ask them if we could skip a day in an attempt to avoid the pain and discomfort. Mother and Dad knew that the exercises were necessary and, thus, they did not often give in to my wishes.

After only a few days we noticed a big improvement in my leg muscles and the pain and soreness began to disappear. Within three weeks my leg muscles were loose and the pain was completely gone. I was able to bend my legs by myself and one of the worst periods of my life was finally over.

For the next five years, from the summer of 1935 to the fall of 1941, the extent of medical advice and care I received was limited to periodic trips to the children's hospitals in Huntington and Charleston, West Virginia for check ups and to have my braces adjusted to my growth. In addition, State health nurses visited me about every month to see if there was anything I needed or if they could offer any other assistance.

After having gained some knowledge about cerebral palsy, I realized that those twelve years, the six years before I ever saw an orthopedic doctor and the six years of doing nothing but wearing braces and of going without treatments or training, could possibly have made the difference between my being able to walk and being confined to a wheelchair for the rest of my life.

I doubt very much if I could ever have learned to walk well enough to have travelled about entirely on my own, but it would have been much easier on my family had I been able to get about in my own home. My goals in life might have been set higher and my achievements greater had I learned to walk.

The reason I did not get the training that I should have received during my first twelve years is easy to understand. The medical profession did not know very much about cerebral palsy and, therefore, there were few qualified doctors, therapists or teachers in those days to properly treat and train those afflicted with this condition. It was not until the early 1940's that a concentrated effort was made to learn more about and to develop methods for dealing with and programs for training the cerebral palsied person.

I carry no ill feelings toward anyone or toward life itself because I was not able to get the training I should have during my early years when it could have conceivably changed my life. I realize that everything was done to get the best medical help for me during that period and I accept it at that. It is my honest conviction that when a cerebral palsied person, or any other handicapped individual, attempts to put the blame for his disability on others, or feels bitter toward life, he is being selfish and extremely unfair to himself and everyone else in his life who tries to help him.

It was during the summer of 1940 when a public health nurse from the Department of Health in Charleston, West Virginia, came to our home to explain to my parents the basic cause of cerebral palsy and the type of treatment recommended. The nurse was not an expert on cerebral palsy, but she had recently spent a few weeks at the Children's Rehabilitation Institute near Baltimore, Maryland, where she took a special course on cerebral palsy. The Institute, where I later spent three years, is a center where there is specialization solely in the treatment of cerebral palsy.

Using layman's terms, the nurse patiently explained to Mother and Dad that cerebral palsy is caused by an injury to the motor center of the brain. This area of the brain controls the voluntary and involuntary muscles of the body. We were told also that the extent of the disability depended upon how severely the motor center was damaged. Some cerebral palsied persons cannot talk, but can walk. Some cannot talk or walk, while still others are affected in a variety of other ways.

We learned that there were no 'overnight cures' for the condition and that surgery was not very often used as a corrective measure. The nurse told us that it would take time, patience and a daily schedule of treatment and exercises to help me overcome my disabilities.

Relaxation was the first battle to be fought. It was recommended that a relaxation period be started on a daily basis. It is usually very difficult for the severely afflicted cerebral palsied individual to relax, but he must learn to do so before he can perform such everyday tasks as feeding and dressing himself and caring for his other personal needs with any degree of success.

After a relaxation period of from thirty to forty-five minutes every morning, Mother or Dad (usually Mother since Dad was away at work) would spend another thirty to forty minutes exercising my arms and legs as the nurse had instructed, before replacing my braces.

Outside on the lawn, Dad had set up parallel bars which permitted me to get up on my feet somewhat on my own. The bars consisted of two iron pipes about thirty feet long attached to some two by fours at each end. There were

also seats at each end so that I could sit down whenever I got tired. Many hours were spent on those bars, and I am sure the effort was not all in vain although my ultimate goal, that of walking unassisted, was never fully achieved.

The training program which the nurse had set up for me was followed pretty much as planned until I entered the Mountain State Hospital in Charleston, West Virginia, in September of 1941 for the first and only surgery on my legs. The operation was performed to release some tension which was preventing more normal movement of my legs.

Ever since I have been old enough to fully understand the hopes, expectations, disappointments and heartbreaks of the physically handicapped, I have disliked the phrase 'it takes time' which is used so frequently by medical people in conversation with handicapped persons. I realize that it is necessary to keep up the spirits, the will and the desire of the handicapped to improve, but to continually tell him that 'it takes time' when asked 'when?' or 'how long will it be?' does create a great deal of false hope and can be quite damaging to the severely handicapped person when he finally does realize that many of the goals he has set for himself are beyond his reach.

When I was six years old my mother and father wasted no time in seeing that I began to get the schooling that all children my age need to receive. They wanted to be certain that I had the same opportunity as other youngsters to learn and to develop my mind to its fullest potential.

We lived in the country and our home was approximately two miles from the school. A 'home-bound' county or state program had not been established in West Virginia by the mid 1930's, so my first classroom was my home and my first teacher, my mother. Mother was well qualified to be my teacher. She had formerly taught school at the secondary level in West Virginia and, prior to her marriage, she had taught in western Pennsylvania.

Mother had not taught just one single subject or one grade level, but, as was the practice during her teaching years, had taught children in grades one through eight. The experience she had gained in teaching a wide range of subjects and age groups was, I am sure, invaluable in the years she spent educating me.

Mother gave in to my requests quite often but she did not pamper me and I honestly believe that I was never a 'spoiled child.' In my classroom, Mother insisted that I do a certain amount of work in each subject and she encouraged me to do my work to the best of my ability.

I did not 'attend' classes all day long. Mother always took one to two hours from her usually busy daily schedule to spend time with me on my school work and give me assignments to do on my own.

When I was ten, Dad was able to obtain a classroom chair and desk from an old abandoned country school house. The desk and chair set pleased me very much and it made my school seem much more realistic.

Although I could not write with a pen or pencil, I was excited about the slot on the desk top where pens and pencils could be kept and about the ink well located on the corner of its slanted top. I had a pen and two or three different colored pencils in the slot and I made certain that a bottle of blue ink was set in the ink well.

From time to time the teacher would experience some difficulties with her student. I grew tired of school work, as most children do, and did not want to give up my play time to do lessons in reading, spelling and arithmetic. When I became too stubborn and rebellious, Mother would put her foot down and crack the whip. I knew what Mother's hand felt like as a loving pat on the head, as well as on the backside. Mother almost always had the final say, however, and did what was best.

I advanced through the grades as other students did and if Mother thought I needed additional work in a certain subject at a particular grade level she would not permit me to go on to another grade level until I had completed the work in the previous grade satisfactorily.

Mother patiently taught me from the time I was six years old until 1942 when, at the age of thirteen, my family moved to Maryland and I entered a rehabilitation center. Mother's understanding, guidance and teaching did much to advance my knowledge, help me prepare for further education and face the many obstacles life holds.

In the early 1940's we were told by the Public Health Nurses about a doctor in Baltimore, Maryland, who specialized in the field of cerebral palsy. My father, who had lived and worked on a farm all of his life, began looking for a job on a farm in Maryland.

In late 1941 a distant relative of Dad's told him of a farming opportunity in a locality about fifty miles north of Baltimore. In November of 1941 we left our native state and moved to a dairy farm in Rising Sun, Maryland. My father was to manage the farm for another gentleman who owned two farms. I was delighted to be going to live on a dairy farm as I, too, was a 'farmer.'

During the winter of 1941-42 I was content to enjoy our new adventure. My mother continued to instruct me. This was my last year at home and the end of my adolescence, so to speak.

In the spring we began the process of getting me into a rehabilitation center, which took several months to accomplish. Our long wait for treatments by experts was about to end.

After several trips to Baltimore for examinations and tests by doctors at Johns Hopkins Hospital, I was referred to Dr. Winthrop Phelps. I was told that I was accepted as a student at the Children's Rehabilitation Institute in Cockeysville, Maryland. This was the turning point in my life. I refer to it as my 'first break.'

The Children's Rehabilitation Institute was a center exclusively for cerebral palsied persons. There were about seventy-five students ranging in age from five to thirty years of age, with a staff of about sixty people. The center was in a truly picturesque area. The building and grounds, I was told, were once owned by a multi-millionaire.

At the east entrance to the grounds was a gate house, and the road wound through acres and acres of beautiful lawns and flower gardens. The building itself was made of brick and consisted of one hundred rooms. The section used for school rooms had been the maid's quarters when the building had been a private home. It had five floors and two basements.

The three years that I spent at Cockeysville were years of growing up and they gave me dear and unforgettable memories and friendships which will always be treasured.

While at the Children's Rehabilitation Institute I met two of the most dedicated people I have ever known. They devoted their lives to making life worthwhile for less fortunate individuals.

Dr. Phelps was the Medical Director of the Institute and was the foremost authority in the field of cerebral palsy before and during the 1940's. In the mid 1930's, Dr. Phelps had started the Institute in Reistertown, Maryland. During his teaching years as a professor at Yale, he had coined the phrase 'cerebral palsy'.

Dr. Phelps was the kind of man you could talk to as easily as you could your own father or mother. He was straight forward in answering any questions a person might ask. I had many talks with Dr. Phelps about different aspects of my life. The advice and suggestions this man gave me have helped me throughout my lifetime. I will never forget him.

The Executive Director of the Center was Mr. Benjamin Walpole. To tell you in detail the many ways Mr. Walpole helped every one of us would take more time than I can put into this chapter. The things that I will tell you, I hope will give the proper credit due him.

In his job as Executive Director, Mr. Walpole was every employee combined into one. I sincerely believe that he did every job at the Center at one time or another during my stay there. I know that he spent many nights working on the furnace, he carried patients to and from the dormitories, he even served as cook and dishwasher. Mr. Walpole would take us in his care, give us parental advice and correct us in a stern way whenever he felt we needed it.

Mr. Walpole was the first and only person to take me aside and talk to me about 'the birds and the bees.' He never neglected to tell me when he thought I was failing in my efforts to improve my physical abilities and when he thought that I was not doing my best in school. His counseling was not in vain, as I have resorted to his advice many times when life has been rough.

The medical staff assembled at the Children's Rehabilitation Institute was unique, with each member being an expert in his field.

Now that I am older I realize that people who have been trained to help the handicapped are truly a select group of people. Physical, occupational and speech therapists who worked there were sincere, patient and understanding individuals. They were a bit more than medical people to the students and most of them became close friends.

Our school system was a bit unique in as much as we were not in a specific grade. We would be in one grade in one subject and perhaps a different grade in another. The tests we took were geared to determine what class we were in. As I remember, we had three elementary rooms, a junior high room and a high school class. The teachers were all well qualified and they, too, were very understanding during a time in history when cerebral palsied individuals were not widely accepted or understood in society. These teachers were rare in their knowledge of our physical disability.

During the war years, while I was a student at C.R.I., non-professional personnel were difficult to find. House mothers took the place of nurses in the dormitories and some of these people came from as far away as Georgia and the Carolina's. These people were also understanding and many of them also became personal friends of the students. I have kept in touch with many of them over the past thirty-five years.

For some reason, unknown to me, there were very few wheelchairs at the center, therefore, we had to be carried by orderlies from one department to

another. Most of the men were very thoughtful and considerate. All in all we were one big happy student and staff family.

I believe that for every young man and lady the teenage years are the most difficult time of life. For a teenager facing a lifetime of being handicapped, life is even more difficult. I discovered that I had to understand myself before I could ask others to accept me. Through the efforts of a speech therapist, Mrs. Julia Gratke, daily sessions were started. During these sessions we would talk about our physical disabilities, opportunities and limitations.

I was away from home for the first time and homesickness was one of the biggest obstacles I had to overcome. The saddest moments I can remember were when I would get a letter from Mom or Dad. I recall once I had a friend write a letter to my mother for me and I told her that when I came home I was going to commit suicide if I had to come back to C.R.I. but the longer I stayed there the better I liked it and I saw the many opportunities it held for me.

I believe that I grew up and matured faster than most other kids my age. During my teenage years and on into my early twenties I had high hopes and great expectations. I realized that some of my goals would be difficult to attain, but I truly expected to have an adequate education, a job and a wife and family. In a way some of these goals were reached, as you will read further on in this book.

On life's roadway each of us faces turns and bumps which we must travel around and over. I've faced my share of road blocks.

One of the biggest problems a handicapped person has to face is being accepted by the public. Cerebral palsied persons have an added difficulty because of our physical appearance. We often exhibit uncontrollable body movements and we frequently have difficulty speaking. We are sometimes difficult to understand and may be inaccurately perceived as being mentally retarded.

In my life I have found that making it a point to inform people about my disability has helped them to accept me as 'one of the gang.'

About a year after entering C.R.I., I became more and more aware of my disability and decided to purposely or otherwise learn as much as I could about it. I sought out those therapists, teachers and other personnel who were willing to talk to me about my condition. A group of students met once a week to discuss cerebral palsy and its various effects on us. Most of us, for the first time in our lives, learned that we would never be completely cured of this disability. Therefore, we had to do our best with our limitations and physical disabilities. I

learned that what God had not given me in physical ability I had to make up for with my own efforts.

I can honestly say, and all of my instructors and teachers would confirm my statement, that we made an all out effort in our rehabilitation program. That task was not easy and I spent countless hours walking with the assistance of the parallel bars and on skis. Many hours were also spent working in the occupational therapy department coloring and buttoning clothes. Learning to use the typewriter turned out to be the most worthwhile and rewarding skill that I mastered there. All of these activities were accomplished in the form of treatment.

In spite of my present condition I have no regrets whatsoever about trying as hard as I did when I was a teenager.

I made steady progress in both therapy and the classroom. I became quite independent and learned to feed and dress myself except for buttons and bows. I needed someone to help me button my buttons and tie my shoes. I could transport myself anywhere in the building in my wheelchair. Advancement in the classroom was also rapid and this pleased me. I went from the fifth grade to junior high school in about two years.

I believe that at the age of fifteen I had an adult mind and I took my challenges and opportunities seriously. My maturity can, in part, be credited to my talks with Mr. Walpole. I think I faced reality well.

They say that in the spring of the year a young man's fancy turns to love. Such was the case in my life, and I had my first love affair.

My love was a gorgeous blonde whose personality and charm completely captured my heart. She came to C.R.I. as a student occupational therapist and I was assigned to her as a student. After only about two weeks I was seeing her on a daily basis. Needless to say, the O.T. department became my favorite location in the building. This was my first real love and the feeling grew deeper each day. It was a feeling I had never experienced before.

One day about six weeks after she became very close to me, I went to the department for my regular treatment period and all of the tables and spaces were filled. This was my opportunity to suggest that we go and have a 'talk.' We went into a private conference room so we could be alone. Being young and naive, I said to her, "Besides my mother and father, I like you very much." Her reaction was overwhelming to say the least, as she sat there on the arm of the davenport looking at me. She stood up, took me in her arms and said, "Do you want to do something?" and she anticipated my answer by asking, "What?" She then gave me my first big love kiss. I did not expect this. My heart began to

beat rapidly. I thought to myself, "Could she feel the same way I do?" Without thinking, I pulled her near me and kissed her on the cheek.

Most of that afternoon and night were spent with nothing and no one but Charlotte on my mind. My best friend, Sonny, was the first to hear about my new life experience. He and I had many talks about life and we shared many confidences.

During the last week of Charlotte's training at C.R.I. I had a very bad cold and was confined to bed. This turned out to be quite 'convenient' as Charlotte would spend her noon hour with me in my room. We had some interesting talks and I was saddened when the week came to an end.

Although I did not hear this until about two months after Charlotte left the rehabilitation center, I was highly honored to hear that she had confided to another good friend of mine that I 'had the right technique.' To this day I consider that to be one of my highest honors.

I corresponded with her for about four or five months after she completed occupational therapy training and joined the armed forces. She will always remain in my mind and have a place in my heart, although I may never see her again.

I believe that a young person should set goals early in life. I think that, in my particular case, adulthood started about the age of fifteen. Many of my teachers, therapists and friends have had a great influence and have given me much advice which has been useful in my life.

It was about the age of fifteen that I began to realize that I was somebody and I wanted to make something of myself in spite of my physical disabilities. I am sure that at the time I did not fully realize that my disabilities would create many limitations in terms of what I could realistically achieve. However, I believe that this was good.

My goals were high, indeed, but it was then, as it is now, my belief that it is better for one to set goals which are too high and may never be attained, than to set them too low and never accomplish anything. I cannot recall anyone during this time span ever telling me that my expectations were unattainable or unrealistic. I do not believe that a severely handicapped person should be told that he is incapable of doing anything he desires to attempt. It is my opinion that it is psychologically as well as emotionally easier on the individual to learn what he can or cannot do on his own. This may take a much longer period of time, but the individual will eventually know what can or cannot be accomplished.

My goals were somewhat far-fetched as a teenager but I believe that they served to broaden my outlook on life while at the same time helping me to realize my limitations as well as my potential.

In 1944, when I was fifteen years of age, I had a physical therapist who was also afflicted with a mild case of cerebral palsy. This person took a great interest in me and was instrumental in helping me tremendously. His great influence on me inspired me to want one day to become a therapist myself.

While I never achieved my goal of becoming a therapist (since I found this occupation far beyond my reach) the inspiration did help me to learn more about my physical condition and it also helped me accept my handicaps.

I also had a goal to someday have a workshop in my home where I could make things out of wood and possibly use the wooden items as a source of income. This goal came about as a result of doing some woodworking projects in occupational therapy at several rehabilitation centers.

Many of the goals I was able to attain later in life were reached through determination and with the help of many wonderful people with whom I have become associated. Again, I believe that while one must set goals high, goals must, at the same time be realistic.

For the severely handicapped individual one of the greatest desires in life is to get those people who surround him, as well as the public in general, to accept him as he truly is; as an individual. Too often people prejudge the handicapped and often offer sympathy rather than giving the understanding which is really needed. A cerebral palsied person is often prejudged to be mentally retarded, alcoholic or even harmful to people within the community. This misunderstanding often comes about as a result of the involuntary motions of the body or body extremities and the speech impairment of the cerebral palsied. Therefore, not only does the handicapped individual have to overcome his own handicap, but also the ignorance of those unfamiliar with each individual handicapping condition and situation. Ignorance and misunderstanding only add to the seemingly insurmountable obstacles already facing the handicapped person.

While I was involved with the rehabilitation center in Maryland, a speech therapist held weekly sessions for some of the individuals. One of the things we accomplished during these talk sessions was to vent our inner feelings and to express what it was that we wanted out of life. As I recall, one of the main topics of conversation was wanting to be accepted. I made up my mind at an early age that I would do whatever I could in order to get people to understand and accept me just as another person, not as a handicapped person. I sincerely believe that the handicapped can also do much on their own to encourage others to accept

them. They must not withdraw from society, but it is important that handicapped individuals present themselves in a fashion which is acceptable to society.

Personal appearance is important and always plays an important part in being accepted. Therefore, it is extremely important that those having handicaps strive to keep themselves presentable at all times. In order to be accepted we must be aggressive yet not overly forceful when interacting with the public. We must show those with whom we are associated that, although we may have physical disabilities, we still possess the same intelligence as others. Because we have lost the use of our legs and hands, our mental abilities are not also automatically impaired.

What is needed, in my opinion, for the handicapped to be better accepted by the public, is a comprehensive program of education. Those of us with handicaps must share in the responsibility of informing the public. This can be accomplished by actively demonstrating to others that we are, in fact, mentally competent. Only when the public is made aware of the plight of the handicapped will we truly obtain our rightful place in society.

When I entered the Children's Rehabilitation Institute on August 14, 1942, it was understood that I would be there only for a period of two years. C.R.I. was a privately owned rehabilitation center. However, some cost was carried by the State of Maryland. The State would pay tuition for a few selected individuals for a period of two years. Because the center was privately operated by Dr. Phelps, it was quite expensive, with tuition which amounted to $250.00 monthly; a substantial amount at that time. Because my family's financial assets were limited, we found ourselves unable to pay the cost of tuition.

I was aware that I would be leaving C.R.I. in August of 1945 well in advance of my actual departure date. The few years I had spent at C.R.I. proved to be years of maturity, education and overall improvement in my physical condition. Last, but not least, it was a period of time for meeting and getting to know people who helped mold me into the person I am today. Needless to say, I was far from overjoyed at the prospect of leaving C.R.I. The many people I met and the many things I learned proved to be instrumental in shaping my life.

After leaving the center, the next ten months were spent in reacquainting myself with my family. My three years away from home had turned me from a child into a young man. The years left me with an entirely different outlook on life; an outlook with high hopes and expectations for the future. During the ten months not only did I reacquaint myself with my family, but I made new friends in the community, which I had not had a chance to do previously.

During my first year at C.R.I. my family had moved to New York State, but my father had taken a new type of job and he continued to work in Maryland during the next two and a half years.

While at C.R.I. I had the opportunity to become acquainted with a gentleman who had a son afflicted with cerebral palsy. This gentleman, fortunately for me, took a personal interest in my life. He took it upon himself to contact the authorities in New York State and in so doing shortened considerably the waiting time for my entrance into the New York State rehabilitation system.

Early in 1946 I began to look forward to going 'back to school' where I could resume the schooling and therapy programs which had been so successful in the previous four years. My hopes and dreams remained high for the future.

On June 18, 1946, a new phase began in my life. It was on this date that I entered the New York State Rehabilitation Hospital located in West Haverstraw, New York. West Haverstraw is located on the banks of the Hudson River, several miles south of West Point, and about thirty miles north of New York City. The hospital is one of the leading rehabilitation hospitals in the country.

When I entered the hospital, most of the patients were afflicted with polio. I like to think that I was a pioneer in the eventual inclusion of cerebral palsied people. In fact, a unit specifically for those with cerebral palsy was later formed.

The center had excellent physical and occupational therapy departments. About a year after I entered the hospital a new therapy department called rehab was opened. The rehab department was staffed primarily with physical therapists. The main activities were exercising on the mats, walking on parallel bars and accomplishing other every day activities such as learning to button, tie bows, feed oneself and use public transportation. The center had acquired an old bus and a car for the purpose of practicing using public transportation and I learned how to transfer myself from the wheelchair to the front seat of the bus.

The every day activities were set up so that there were a given number of minutes to complete each activity. I managed to reach most of my required goals with the exception of the walking activities.

The education at the hospital was a marked improvement over the Maryland system and was under the direction of the New York State Department of Education. With the assistance of several people I overcame a problem which had proven to be a barrier to my overall progress.

In June of 1947, as graduation neared, I found that I was required to appear on stage before a large audience. I began to wonder if I could go

through with graduation. I had talked with two teachers and a roommate who was three or four years older than I about being self conscious when in the public eye. Fortunately for me, they were able to convince me that everything would be fine and I managed to get through the graduation no less the worse for the wear and tear.

As I stated earlier, the rehabilitation center in Maryland based its educational program, not on a grade level, but more on a subject level. In many ways I believe that this system had merit. Case in point; if a student could accomplish math at a grade level higher than he could perhaps accomplish English, he would be encouraged to continue at that pace. This resulted in no one doing high school work in math and English at a lower level. All subjects were done, to the extent possible, at the same grade level.

In June of 1946, when I entered the New York State hospital, I made the decision to take a summer course, hoping that it would help me catch up on my education. I had been doing sixth grade work from June through September when I entered the seventh grade. The following January my teachers made the determination that I had advanced to the point that I could be placed in the eighth grade. I might add that my age, as well as my maturity, had much to do with my rapid advancement.

The next two and a half years were, without a doubt, a time in my life when I established my overall makeup. The help I received, as well as the advice from teachers, therapists and many others, contributed greatly to my physical improvement and education, making me a better human being.

My hope and dream was that I might someday walk and the therapy programs at both rehabilitation centers I had attended were both geared toward that end. All my life I had been told by every physician who saw and examined me that I would eventually walk, but that it would take much time and much effort on my part. I had suggested many times that I be allowed to try to use crutches. I was told that this step should not be taken because it was possible for me to learn to walk without them. During the early months of 1948, however, the doctors finally consented to allow me to try using crutches for the first time in my life.

The experience with the crutches proved to be unsuccessful because my balance had been affected by the cerebral palsy and there seemed to be an 'overcharged motion' in my arms which made it difficult for me to keep the crutches on the floor. A pair of crutches was even weighted with lead with the hope that this would help. Unfortunately, the experiment was not successful.

One morning in the spring of 1948 I went to talk with the head of the rehab department. She was a therapist with many years of experience in her

field. As it turned out, she completely shocked me. She cast a shadow over my future plans by telling me that the medical team had come to the conclusion that I should concentrate my efforts on being independent in my wheelchair. In that moment my hope and dream of walking vanished forever.

I remember that I became very upset and discouraged and I wondered if I should leave that place. I returned to the ward that morning, refusing to attend any of my required classes or to do anything else which had been part of my treatment program. Once again, several of the staff members and some of my friends came to help and encourage me. These people gave me much worthwhile advice, and after listening to and talking with them I reached the conclusion that in spite of this setback, I must continue on.

In the months to follow, I found that I was able to become much more independent through the use of my wheelchair. A difficult lesson was learned. I found that I was able to overcome setbacks and in doing so was able to accomplish a great deal. All that I had to do was make up my mind that I could do whatever I wanted to do.

When I entered West Haverstraw in 1946, I became acquainted with a remarkable woman by the name of Frances Partridge, who was a high school teacher. Little did I know that this woman would be a significant influence in my life. If I had to single out one person who helped me overcome my self-consciousness, that person would have to be Frances Partridge.

Miss Partridge took a particular interest in people who had cerebral palsy. Although not a speech teacher, she did start a small group, which was more or less a speech class, which met on a daily basis. As a result of participating in this group I overcame many of my speech problems simply by talking. A large part of my problem proved to be my lack of confidence in my own ability to talk. It has been my experience that many cerebral palsied persons suffer this same problem.

Miss Partridge was a psychology teacher who taught evening classes at Hunter College in New York City. One day she took me by surprise by asking me to speak to some of her students. She was to bring them to the center some Saturday morning. After a great deal of thought and much encouragement from Miss Partridge I eventually consented to speak to her students. For the first time in my life I was going to speak to a group of people about cerebral palsy.

The Saturday arrived and I went before Miss Partridge's class to speak. Needless to say, I was very nervous, but to my own surprise I did quite well. When the speech was finished everyone congratulated me, which did wonders for my spirit and my self-confidence. That speech proved to be only the first of

many I have given during my lifetime and I have found that with each speech I manage to leave a good impression on my audience.

Only a few years ago I had the opportunity to speak to a church group. After speaking I received a most thoughtful card from a teenage girl telling me how much she enjoyed my speech. I was deeply moved by her note. As I tried to state earlier, Miss Partridge was truly the type of person who had the ability to bring out the best in a human being. Without a doubt, she was 'one in a million!'

After heeding the advice of the medical team and not concentrating my efforts on walking, and after recovering from my disappointment, I set out to become as independent as possible in my wheelchair. The disappointment of not being able to walk was eventually eased through the help of several people. These people gave me encouragement and were instrumental in restoring the self-confidence which seemed to have disappeared at the time I was told to give up all thoughts of ever walking.

In the months that followed I put much effort in continuing to learn to dress myself and transport myself in my wheelchair. I was able to completely dress myself (with the exception of the buttons and bows). I often think how much easier it would have been had we had some of the dress styles which are available today. If we had had zippers and shoes with velcro straps, I could have dressed myself completely without assistance. I was able to feed myself provided some of the food was placed on my plate, but I did require assistance in cutting meat and other difficult foods. All in all, by September of 1948 I was able to get along fairly well from my wheelchair.

In September of 1948, at the beginning of the school year, I entered my sophomore year of high school and did quite well. I was happy and content. I had managed to overcome one of the major traumatic experiences of my life.

My progress in high school at West Haverstraw continued. I had never been happier in my life. I continued to show rapid, steady improvement toward becoming independent in my wheelchair. My studies during my sophomore year were more than satisfactory and my hopes were high that I would finish high school.

There was a shadow of worry all summer long. Little did I know just how serious this was to be. I later discovered that I had not been informed of all of the facts.

My mother had entered the hospital in May of 1948 and had undergone a serious operation. The details, however, of mother's health had been withheld from me. I spent the Fourth of July holiday with my family at home and Mother appeared to be doing quite well.

On the last Tuesday of October, 1948, I was asked to see a social worker, and without prior warning I was informed that I was to be discharged the following day; October 27th. Upon hearing this, I was dismayed and disappointed at the sudden turn of events in my life. The disappointment of that day, however, proved to be comparatively small in light of what I would feel some four days later.

I spent the afternoon and evening of October 26th saying good-bye to my friends, many of whom had contributed immensely to the quality of my life. Needless to say, it was difficult to bid farewell to therapists, teachers and fellow patients who had done so much to help me mature and better understand life. At this point I could mention names of many wonderful individuals but to do so would be at the risk of excluding someone deserving of mention.

On a sunny, beautiful autumn day, October 27th, I reluctantly departed West Haverstraw wondering what lay ahead for me in the future.

When I arrived home late in the evening of that same day, I learned that my mother had been admitted to the hospital earlier that week for a physical examination. Dad and I made plans to visit her the following Saturday evening. At the time, we did not own an automobile so a friend had offered to take us to see Mother. I have always thought that fate intervened in our visit as our friend completely forgot about his commitment. We waited patiently for him to show up and transport us to the hospital until it became apparent that it was much too late for the planned visit. At about 9:00 that evening, the hospital called asking Dad to come. He returned about an hour and a half later to get my sister and me. Mother had taken a turn for the worse and was gravely ill. For some unknown reason I decided not to go at that time. Dad and my sister returned home about 2:00 a.m. and told me that Mother had passed away about an hour earlier.

The next three days were filled with turmoil and this was a very sad time for the family. We had decided that Mother would have wanted to be buried in her native home of West Virginia, so we made the arrangements to accomplish this. We also decided that since Mother had so many friends and neighbors in Van Etten, we would also hold a local funeral service. The services in Van Etten were to be held that Monday afternoon, then we would depart for West Virginia.

I had a most difficult decision to make. Would I attend Mother's funeral? Because I wanted to remember Mother the way she had been, I decided not to attend either the Van Etten service or the service in West Virginia. It was also my decision, at that time, that since I would not attend Mother's services, it would not be right for me to attend services for any other family members. Years passed and somehow we tend to change our decisions. Today, I doubt very

seriously that I would refuse to attend Dad's funeral or the funeral for any other family member.

On Tuesday, Election Day, 1948, we began our long journey to West Virginia. It took some twelve hours to make the trip which was long and difficult in more ways than one. The funeral services were attended by many relatives and friends whom I had not seen for many years. They all came to my grandmother's home after the services. It was good to see many of them even under such sad circumstances.

After the funeral services, Dad and I decided to remain in West Virginia for another ten days in order that we might visit friends and relatives and to try to get through the grief of Mother's passing. The following week was sad, but time helped relieve the pain of our great loss.

Dad and I returned to Van Etten on Saturday, November 15th, to face an empty home for the first time in our lives. We now had to plan our lives without the guidance of a wife and mother. My sister, who is a year younger than I, was still at home and she did her part in making life easier for all of us.

After a personal loss, one realizes that life must go on in spite of the vacuum that a tragedy such as death always causes.

I decided that I wanted to continue my education because I had been so successful in recent years. I had never before gone to a public school, so I decided to pursue that route. Late in November, my sister, Hilda, took me to see the supervising principal who had been one of her teachers when she was a student at Van Etten Central School.

Mr. Phelps, the principal, in discussing my decision to continue my schooling, suggested that it might be best to send a tutor to my home. It was my desire to attend the school in person, so I quickly rejected the tutor idea and asked if I could come to the school building each day. He agreed to my wishes so I started my newest adventure in life.

To the best of my knowledge, I was the first physically handicapped, wheelchair bound student to attend Van Etten Central School which had opened in 1939. It was quite an experience for me and I am sure it was a rare experience for the student body and faculty to have someone in a wheelchair in attendance each day. My family had to make a big adjustment to get me ready for school and the school personnel had to make some changes in the classes I was to attend.

The student body and faculty were a bit uncertain at first as to how to talk to me. They were always very polite and very quick to assist me with any need I

might have. I knew from the beginning that I had to present myself in such a manner that they could accept me as a member of the student population. I tried to talk to everyone who would listen and I found that almost every day someone new would come by to get acquainted.

Three classrooms were moved downstairs so that I could study three main subjects. I took English, history and biology and all three of my teachers were men. I was enrolled as a sophomore but because of my late start in school in the early years, I was four years older than the average student in the sophomore class. Class size was small with ten to fifteen students in each class.

An incident in my biology class which occurred soon after I started school stands out in my memory. The teacher asked, "How many poisonous snakes are there in the United States?" I had my biology book open on the desk and the answer was in full view. When on one seemed to know the answer I gave my first answer in class and, of course, it turned out to be correct. When the teacher said that the answer was right, my fellow students all looked my way and seemed to be surprised. One more barrier was broken down!

One day I asked the biology teacher if I could talk to the class about cerebral palsy. He agreed and thought it was a good idea. One morning he came to class and asked if I was prepared to give my talk. I said that I was, so I had to get my thoughts together quickly. When Mr. Wells announced that I was going to talk to the class, a note of surprise was felt throughout the room.

The talk that I gave that morning was probably the most important thing that I did for myself in that school. It changed the attitude of everyone in that room and eventually the majority of the people in the school toward me and toward the handicapped in general.

In my talk I tried to give the general cause of cerebral palsy and I tried to stress the need for people to accept the handicapped as fellow human beings. Sitting there in the front of the class, I could actually see and feel the attitude of each student change toward me during my talk. They were being told something that they did not know and they learned that I was not much different from them. Upon dismissal of class nearly everyone came by to say something to me. Word gets around, especially among young people. I can see that this attitude has continued throughout the community of Van Etten. It has always amazed me how the people in the town of Van Etten have accepted me and my handicap with great understanding.

My ultimate goal was to find a form of employment by which I could be self-supporting and feel independent. I had done some woodworking in my rehabilitation program at West Haverstraw. Soon after I began school in Van

Etten, a representative of the New York State Vocational Rehabilitation Department contacted me about my future work plans. I discussed with him my background in woodworking and I told him that I had thought about opening a woodworking shop at my home.

We had a barn in the back of the house, a section of which Dad was willing to convert into a shop for me. The man from Vocational Rehabilitation said that his department could purchase some tools for me if we undertook such an adventure.

Vocational Rehabilitation wanted to be sure that I could use the tools before they purchased them. They contacted the industrial arts teacher at the high school, a young man in his first teaching position. I had never met Ken Harris, the teacher, but I soon learned that he was a very understanding person, and over the next four years, he became one of the most helpful people in my life.

Mr. Harris took me under his wing and started to see how much I could do with the tools, making different things. His attitude was always positive and accepting and he encouraged me in everything that I tried to do in the shop. He worked with me from December of 1948 until June of the following year. I made some small items, including a magazine rack, pretty much on my own. By early spring, Mr. Harris apparently thought that my plans for a woodworking shop at home were not practical for me.

One day while I was sitting in his shop, he asked me if I might be interested in having a shop in Van Etten. I was surprised and pleased that he had confidence that I could become a businessman in the community. I told him that I would be interested in a store and I began to look forward to that challenge.

Over the next four or five months, Mr. Harris spent a great deal of time and effort to insure that the store would become a reality. He went to just about every civic organization in the town to secure financial backing for me. By doing this, Mr. Harris was also telling many people that in spite of my handicap, I was capable of becoming a contributing member of the town.

Back at that time, one did not need thousands of dollars to go into business so the support I received from the community was sufficient to open my store. Mr. Harris secured a small building from Mr. T.J. Banfield who owned a large hardware business in the center of town. Mr. Banfield was kind enough to let me have the building which was located next to the Banfield store on Front Street, rent free.

Mr. Harris and I put much thought into what kind of business I should open and he let me make the final decision. There was no gift shop in town at that time, although some stores did carry some items of that nature. I finally decided that I would open a gift shop. Since my name is Charles and I like the name Chuck, I decided to call the new business 'Chuck's Gift Shop.' Not very many people called me Chuck before I opened the shop but it certainly caught on in a hurry and I have been known as Chuck ever since.

With advice from Mr. Harris, I spent the late summer and early fall shopping for my store. It was somewhat difficult to decide what to stock because of my lack of experience in the field. A line of greeting cards was among the first items selected. I also purchased a line of paper items and some leather goods. We selected a line of cosmetic gift sets and other types of merchandise were added as the weeks went by and the shop opened.

Dad was a big help in this whole project. He repainted and redecorated the interior of the building and helped to obtain some old showcases and refurbished them for me.

With all of these things falling into place, we set an opening date of October 14, 1949. We opened on a Friday evening at 7:00 p.m. when other businesses in town were open.

I remember being quite nervous as I dressed for the occasion. Quite frankly I did not know what to expect from the people of Van Etten. Back in those days a businessperson always wore a shirt and tie and I tried to be no different.

The opening hours were not spectacular but quite a few people came in, including several of my classmates of the year before. Some had curious looks on their faces and a few did not know how to approach me. I believe that it is safe to say that I made some kind of history in the town of Van Etten. I was the first businessman with a severe disability.

It was the beginning of an era which I believe helped me and everyone in the community. I am sure that the people of Van Etten learned to understand what being disabled was and that things could be accomplished by a person who was disabled.

I found that as the weeks went by, most people were very helpful and responsive to me in a favorable way. I made new friends quickly. The young people of the community were quicker to come to the store and get acquainted than some of the older people. I found this to be positive because I am sure that many of the fathers and mothers of the younger children got to know me because of the children's relationship to me.

I have often said that I did not become financially wealthy in the three and a half years I was in business, but I became a 'millionaire' in the friends that I made. I will always be grateful to Mr. Harris for the effort he expended to help me get into the business world and to the many friends that I made because of that.

As I stated previously, things were not going well for me, so in January of 1954, I decided to try to locate my brother, Grey, who had left Van Etten in the summer of 1949. I wrote a letter, not knowing whether or not he would receive it. But, in a few weeks time, to my surprise, he called me on the phone. We corresponded for a couple of months and he invited Dad and me to go to California.

Dad agreed to go with me, but he said that he would only stay a short while. We sold our home in Van Etten, which we had owned since 1942, and made plans to go to California. I looked forward to the trip west to see my brother for the first time in six years. I was also looking forward to a change in atmosphere which I so badly needed. On August 9th of that year Dad and I boarded a plane for the first time in my life and headed west, not really knowing what the future would hold. My brother and I had never really had the opportunity to be close, especially as adults, because of the different paths that our lives took in early adulthood.

Grey was two years older than I, but it seemed to me that he had lived a lifetime. He had joined the Navy about three months after his sixteenth birthday in April of 1943 and was in the Pacific theater in October of that same year. His tour of duty took him, among other places, to Saipan. He did not return home until after the war ended in 1945.

Grey was glad to see us after a five year absence, but I have always had the feeling that he did not fully understand the extent of my disability until I went to California. Dad returned to the east within three or four days, reluctant to leave me in California.

During the next five months I was to learn a great deal about my brother which I had not previously known. We got along well and he was considerate and understanding but I found that we were very different in personality in the way that we viewed life and in our life styles. He had separated from his wife and children and I soon discovered that he had some problems of his own.

While I was in Southern California I had the good fortune to make some new friends. The first two and a half months that I was there my brother and I lived in a small apartment and the family next door lent a helping hand. My brother worked the evening shift and Mrs. Dairey would always prepare my dinner and bring it to me. She was an excellent southern-style cook, a native of

Oklahoma, and her food was delicious. The Dairey family always came to see how things were with me while I was alone in the evening.

Another person who came by to make my acquaintance was Donna Jacobs. She was a younger lady, somewhere near my age, whose husband was in the Army, stationed in Japan. She too was thoughtful in many ways and she came to visit quite frequently.

We moved into a single family house about two months after I got to California. This made it easier for me to get to the outside. The apartment had been on the second floor which made it impossible for me to get in and out on my own.

My brother took me to several places of interest in the Los Angeles area and I found Southern California to be quite different from the east. I had gone to California in the mid-summer and I did not see the seasons change when fall came as I had been used to seeing in New York State. It did seem strange indeed to be outside in December in my shirt sleeves.

The Christmas holiday season was celebrated in a big way, minus the snowfall. Because we were in a big city the decorations seemed to be more noticeable than I had been used to seeing and the holiday parades were most enjoyable to watch.

Dad came to spend the holidays and he enjoyed the festivities as well. Soon after New Year he decided to return to New York State and he asked me if I were going back to Van Etten with him. It was a very tough choice to make but after giving it much deep thought, I decided to join him on the plane trip back home. My decision to return to the east was a wise one. As of this writing, more than three decades later, I have not seen my brother since January of 1955.

Back in Van Etten among my many friends, I began to consider what my new interest would be. One of the biggest decisions I have ever made in my lifetime was the purchase of a used electric typewriter.

I know a gentleman in New York City whose son was my friend at the Rehabilitation Center in Maryland. Mr. Adams had helped to arrange a deal with I.B.M whereby the corporation sold its used typewriters only to handicapped people. Mr. Adams helped me get my first typewriter at a bargain price.

The purchase of this machine opened many avenues to me. I could now write my own letters and engage in other forms of communication without assistance.

I purchased my typewriter in September of 1955 and I discovered that I could use it quite well even though I used the 'one finger' method of typing. Not too many normal people know how difficult it is to write a personal letter by dictating it to someone else. Therefore, being able to use my newly acquired typewriter to do my own correspondence meant a great deal to me.

In June of 1956, a new activity presented itself to me. A group of local men decided to form a town baseball team which would play its games mostly on weekends. Back then just about every town of any size had a team. One evening the men of the town gathered at the school cafeteria to organize the team. Since I knew all the men and I was becoming proficient at typing, I decided to attend the meeting and ask if I might be their sportswriter. There was a local weekly newspaper which was called "The Spencer Needle" which I thought would accept my articles. Baseball was my favorite sport and I believed that I could do a reasonable job. The fact that "The Spencer Needle" was a weekly newspaper would give me plenty of time to permit me to write the articles each week.

So I was off on a new adventure; one which I was certain to enjoy. Later in the summer, the newspaper staff asked me if I would be a feature writer for them and I became the Van Etten news reporter. The feature writer prepared a Personals Column which included social events and visiting neighbor's items. Before school started that year, the high school Athletic Director, who had read my articles during the summer, asked me if I would like to be the sportswriter for the Van Etten Central School. I accepted with great anticipation and excitement.

When I became the sportswriter for the Van Etten Central School I felt that I should attend as many games as possible, so I asked the coach if I could go to the games on the school bus with the athletes. He arranged for me to do just that. Several of the bigger young men would always carry me on and off the bus. Back in those days there were no wheelchair lifts on school buses.

Going to and from the games was a lot of fun, but when I put something in my column which was 'controversial' or if I gave a basketball player a nickname, I was sure to hear about it. I recall a basketball player who seemed to be, in his hustling way, always on the floor. I called him 'Leon, the floor, Talada' and the name caught on.

Through my sportswriting I also made many new acquaintances and friends in other schools throughout the area. Other school officials were always very kind and considerate when we visited their schools.

In 1957, I saw a group of kids one evening, over across the road from my home, on the baseball field. Since I had been interested in baseball for a number of years, I had a desire to try my knowledge of the game by coaching. I

went across the road to the diamond and called the boys over to where I was in my wheelchair.

There had never been a Little League baseball team in Van Etten and I asked them if they would like to form a team. Their response was, of course, very positive and they were anxious to get going. The first problem was that there were only eight boys at that first gathering. I told them what they already knew, that they needed at least nine boys to play the game. Since we were starting from the very scratch, we decided that each boy would wear a tee shirt and dungarees and I asked them to each bring their own baseballs and bats. In just a few days I felt like 'the old woman in the shoe who had so many children she didn't know what to do.' Believe it or not, in a week I had twenty-seven boys between the ages of eight and thirteen. It seemed for a while that every time I looked up I saw a new face.

After about two weeks the boys got restless and were anxious to play a game. Since we started late in the season we were not in a league, so we had to search for teams to play in a practice setting. We scheduled a game with a team from the Ithaca area and two games with an all-star team from Waverly, a much larger area than we were from.

Our first game was played near Ithaca and we won with flying colors. The abilities of these two teams were about evenly matched, but I was worried about the Waverly all-star team, which we were to play the next evening. The game was our local 'opener' so we had many people attend which made both the boys and the coach a bit nervous.

As I was getting the team together, one of the local boys had a friend his age visiting him from Baltimore. This young man was quite a pitcher in that Maryland city. Since this was my team which I had put together myself, and there were no restrictions, I decided that he could be a member of the Van Etten team. I saved him for the Waverly game because I knew that the competition with the all-stars would be fierce. With him on the mound, we beat Waverly six to five that evening. I was very proud that the team was able to get off to such a fine start.

We divided the next two games, so we ended up with a record of three wins and one loss for the year. That fall a group of parents and other interested people got together and formed the Van Etten Boy's Baseball Association. The people elected me to be the president of the Association, an office which I held for the next ten years.

I continued to coach Little League ball and work with the youngsters during the 1958-59 seasons. One day in the late '50's I was talking with the Van Etten Central School Athletic Director. He was expressing a need for a Junior

High basketball and baseball coach and I expressed a desire to fill that position. After conferring with the supervising principal, I was offered the position at a minimal wage. I was delighted with the challenge and started my new position with enthusiasm and eagerness. For the next five years I, in essence, directed the Junior High athletic program on my own. It was certainly interesting to get the reaction from personnel in the other school systems in the area. These people, however, were cooperative but still competitive on the field of play. Each school's personnel accepted me as they would have accepted anyone else in my position.

We, like all school systems, had winning teams and losing teams. Looking back, I believe that it was a good experience for me and for the athletes who worked with me.

In the fall of 1959 my father, who was a hard working man doing carpenter work, painting and electrical work, became ill. I believe that the problem was a mild nervous condition, but it was never diagnosed as such. He rather suddenly decided that he wanted to go back to his home state of West Virginia.

He wanted me to accompany him and I reluctantly agreed to do so because I thought it would be best for him. During December of that year we sold our home and returned to the area where my father had been raised. For the next five months we rented an apartment in Marlinton, West Virginia. At that time, Dad had four brothers and three sisters living within a fifteen mile radius of Marlinton so, in a sense, we spent the winter re-acquainting ourselves with our relatives. I did not have as much to occupy my time as I had had in Van Etten, but I kept myself busy typing letters and visiting with my relatives.

In the spring of 1960, Dad had regained his health and, much to my surprise, wanted to return to Van Etten. We both knew far more people in Van Etten than in West Virginia and Dad knew that there would be work in Van Etten for him to do. We returned to New York State in late April of 1960 and in a short while we were back to the activities in which we had been involved for the past several years. I was happy to be back and I believe that Dad felt much the same way.

Among the many people who have helped to make my life worthwhile and happy are the late Nicholas Marchase and my good friend, Paul Kretschmer. I was closely associated with these two men for about ten years.

Mr. Marchase was Supervising Principal of the Van Etten Central Schools and Mr. Kretschmer was the Athletic Director and coach of various sports teams in the school system. For four years, Dad and I lived across the street from the school and the athletic field. During this time I spent many hours in Mr. Kretschmer's office and with the athletic teams in practice and games.

Mr. Kretschmer was the person who had asked me to be sportswriter for the Van Etten teams and he, along with Mr. Marchase, gave me the opportunity to coach the Junior High baseball and basketball teams. These two gentlemen also encouraged me in numerous ways, and any success which I enjoyed certainly was due, in part, to their interest and faith in me.

One of the many families in the Van Etten area which has helped me tremendously during my life is the Benjamin family. There were six boys and two girls, all children of Art and Gladys. This family was truly God-sent to me. The boys were spaced just enough in age that they spent eleven consecutive years helping me be an active community resident. Without the devotion and time of these young men, I could not have taken part in many of the activities in which I was involved.

Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin encouraged their sons to help me despite the fact that I was not able to give them too much in the way of financial remuneration. The elder Benjamin's always told me that they felt it was good for their sons to be associated with me.

The boys were spaced by age so that when one reached high school age and wanted to do other things, there was always a brother to take his place. One or two of the boys stayed with me well into their high school years. They were all physically strong and quite capable of helping me get from place to place.

I said that these boys were devoted to me, but that is an understatement. Each boy, during his tenure with me, was always there when I wanted to go somewhere or do something. Each boy would come early and stay late from an athletic event, social occasion or meeting.

Dave, Bob, Don, Bill, Russ and Jack were a lot of fun for me to be with. They were always eager to think of new 'entertainment' putting me pretty much in the center of attention. We all had many good times together.

One event which I shall never forget occurred one afternoon when David and Bob took me to an amusement park in Elmira. They helped me take a ride on about every adult ride in the park including the roller coaster, bumper cars, ferris wheel and the merry-go-round. The event of the day was the ride on the merry-go-round. Since I was definitely not a cowboy, I could not ride on a horse. The boys helped me to a seat on the ride and Dave and Bob both climbed up on horses several feet ahead of me and with their backs to me. After several 'rounds' on the ride, I slid from the seat onto the floor, with my head under the seat. The boys did not notice my dilemma until the ride operator saw me on the floor and stopped the merry-go-round. Coming to my rescue, David asked,

"What are you doing down there?" My quick reply was that I was looking for chewing gum.

Each one of the young Benjamin's was an individual. Each had to adjust to me and I to him. After David, the eldest, finished his 'tour' with me, the next boy came well prepared for his line of duty.

One of the most heart warming events of my life took place after the Benjamin boys had all grown to adulthood. Jack, the youngest, invited me to his wedding in 1974. I had intended to go, but events put me in the hospital two days before the wedding was to take place. As I lay in the hospital late on Saturday afternoon of the wedding day, disappointed that I could not be at the wedding, who should appear in my room but the bride and groom still dressed in their wedding attire. The couple brought me a delightful gift which I still possess, the bride's garter. The fact that this couple came to see me on this special day was living proof of their thoughtfulness and devotion to a friend. All of the boys, even now that they are scattered far and near, always come to see me when they are back in the area. No, I shall never forget the Benjamin family.

In 1963 I had some physical difficulties which probably led to my hospitalization in 1974, an event which was to completely change my life style forever. In 1963 I experienced some severe difficulty with my hands and arms. All of a sudden my hands and arms tightened up so severely that I had little control over them. I could no longer type or even straighten my arms out by myself. After consulting with an orthopedic doctor who offered little help, I turned to a chiropractor who showed sincere interest in helping me. Twice a week for six weeks I went to the chiropractor who did help me to regain control of my limbs so that I could resume my sportswriting and Junior High coaching responsibilities.

I did not have a great deal of trouble with my arms and hands for the next ten years, although there was some tightening of the muscles from time to time. In late 1973, I began to experience some serious difficulty, however, and by January of 1974 I had decided to see a neurologist at the Robert Packer Hospital in Sayre, Pennsylvania.

The Robert Packer Hospital is one of the leading medical centers in the United States and it is well known for its fine medical staff. On my first visit to the hospital, the doctor decided that I needed medication to help me relax. He prescribed Valium and told me to return in one month. I followed the doctor's instructions but soon discovered that the medication made me very sleepy most of the time. In addition, it did not appear to be helping my physical problems.

Little did I know when I returned to the doctor on February 14th that my life would be so completely changed in such a short time. After I explained my

concern about the medication to the doctor, he said that he could give me something to counteract the sleepiness. I agreed to try the new medication and was ready to leave his office when I remembered to tell him that I had been experiencing some pain in my legs. Because he did not know what was causing the pain, he suggested that I be admitted to the hospital for tests. I had not come prepared to do this, but I did agree to do as he suggested.

During the next two days I underwent a spinal test and various other tests and x-rays. Some of the tests were not easy to endure. On February 20th, the neurosurgeon asked to speak to me in his office. The surgeon was the type who seemed uncomfortable when his patient asked questions. Explaining details was not his favorite pastime. He did tell me that after reviewing the results of my tests that he and the other doctors had decided that I needed surgery on my neck. He stated to me, "In layman's terms, your neck is wearing out." He also said that the surgery would be a two stage operation. One stage would entail going into the back of my neck, and the other would be on the front of my neck. I asked him what would happen if I did not have the surgery. His quick response was, "You could possibly die rather suddenly." Naturally I was shocked.

Not once in our conversation did the surgeon mention that there was any possibility that I would lose full use of my arms and hands, rendering me a quadriplegic. Thoughts of that nature never entered my mind, so naturally I did not ask the doctor if such an eventuality might occur. I simply assumed that I would be better after the surgery, not worse.

I did ask what my chances of surviving the surgery were. He very bluntly said, "One chance in nine." I heard him say, "One chance in nine" but for some reason I miscalculated the numbers. I thought he meant nine chances out of ten. I believe that God was with me at that time and did not mean for me to understand the true meaning of the statement. Had I fully understood the narrow chance that he gave me to survive the surgery, I am not sure that I would have gone through with it. I am totally convinced, therefore, that for reasons known only to Him, God wanted for me to have that surgery.

On Friday morning, as I was taken to the operating room, I did not really know what to expect, but I certainly did not visualize that from that day on I would be paralyzed.

The first thing I remember after the surgery was awakening late in the evening in the intensive care unit with various tubes and apparatus attached to me, still groggy from the anesthetic. I remember that the surgeon came to see me and his only remark was, "You can turn your neck all you want, you will not damage it any more." I was not fully aware yet that I could not move my arms at all.

Those of us who have experienced being in an intensive care unit know that there is really no quiet there, so I drifted in and out of sleep all night long. The next day, Saturday, my father and sister and a few close friends were allowed to visit me for a short period of time.

Needless to say, I eventually began to wonder why I could not move my arms. It may sound strange, but no doctor from that hospital ever explained to me that I would never again have the use of my arms and hands. Maybe, just maybe, it was better that I was not told this news suddenly. God works in strange ways in our lives and probably there is a reason which only He knows, which explains why events turned out the way they did. I have enough faith to believe that there is a purpose for everything.

I was moved on Tuesday to a semi-private room and was greatly relieved to be out of the intensive care unit. For the following two weeks I wondered when the second step of the surgery would be performed. The surgeon had the reputation of not wanting to discuss details with his patients, so I hesitated from day to day to ask what his plans were for me. One morning I decided that it was time to ask. He reluctantly told me that he would let me go home and he would decide later on the surgery. I thought that this decision was strange, but I accepted his explanation.

About two weeks after my surgery another physical problem developed. I began to feel hot during the evening and night time. Different tests and drugs were used to try to determine the cause of the fever but nothing could be pinpointed, so I remained in the hospital for four weeks after the surgery.

I made some fine new friends during this hospital stay but I was glad to go home on March 23rd. Things were going to be different at home because of my new difficulties. I was to need permanent total care from my father from that time on and a young man to assist as well.

On my discharge date, the surgeon left word that he would like to see my father in his office before I went home. It was Dad's first contact of any kind with the doctor either before or after the surgery. The doctor told Dad that he would not be doing more surgery because he believed that I would not survive another operation. A friend of mine who worked at the hospital told me that the doctor did conduct a special seminar on my case. I have recently, more than fourteen years after the surgery, obtained a detailed medical report on my surgery, and I have learned a great deal more about my condition.

I regret that I did not ask for this report much earlier. My life since that surgery has been very different, but again, with the help of many wonderful people, life goes on.

The months ahead were filled with uncertainty and I spent the spring and summer months wondering what the future held for me. I was physically weak from the surgery and emotionally distraught from the fact that I no longer had the use of my arms and hands. I also had to learn to deal with other problems which were completely new to me. The surgery not only took away the use of my arms. There were real problems in dealing with other parts of the body to which I had to adjust and learn to cope.

Because of the surgery, my neck was very weak and I had to use a neck brace to hold my head up. The doctor never explained the cause of the weakness, nor did he tell me that my neck muscles would ever get strong enough to support my head. I wore the neck brace for about five weeks before I felt some strength coming back into my muscles. By September I had just about regained the strength I needed in my neck.

A very good friend provided a much needed break in my life by taking Dad and me to the Amish country in Lancaster, Pennsylvania for a weekend in August of that year. The day that we left on our trip, August 9th, was the day that President Nixon resigned from office and left the White House.

The trip to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, was delightful. My friend, Kevin Leonard, had been there a couple of times before and knew the sights and the back roads of the area very well. We got to see the Amish people work on their farmlands and we stopped at a couple of their roadside shops. It was an educational trip for me, as I had never seen an Amish community before.

A couple of highlights were a trip to a huge farmer's market in New Holland, Pennsylvania, and a three mile ride in a horse drawn Amish style buggy. It was a relaxing weekend and a much needed break in my troublesome spring and summer months.

Two of the biggest and most memorable events in my life took place during the summer of 1975 and the spring of 1976. Events such as these take place only once, if ever, in a lifetime.

The Van Etten Youth Athletic Association decided that it would hold a "Chuck Alderman Day" in Van Etten on the last Sunday of June in 1975. I was aware that such an event was planned, but I was overwhelmed by the turnout of so many friends who came to pay their tributes to me. There were between three and four hundred people and the event lasted about three and a half hours.

Several of my friends and others with whom I had been associated in sports for a number of years got up on the stage and said some very nice things about me. Tributes are always nice to hear but they are especially so when they

come from friends and people who know you quite well. This was the case on this very special day in my life.

One of the speakers of the day was Paul Kretschmer, the former Van Etten High School coach. In his very kind comments about me, he proposed that the field on which the event was being held be named in my honor. He suggested that a petition to name the field for me be started.

The suggestion that Mr. Kretschmer made was well accepted and the Spencer-Van Etten School Board approved the petition. On May 15, 1976, the second honor event in my life took place and the field was dedicated and named "Chuck Alderman Field." There were over a hundred people at this dedication held on a Saturday afternoon. In addition to the honor of the dedication, a couple of significant gifts were presented to me; an autographed team book from the Baltimore Orioles signed by Earl Weaver and a cap that Mr. Weaver had kicked all over the field in a heated dispute with an American League umpire in 1975. This incident had become well known in sports circles. The naming of the field in my honor will always remain a highlight of my life.

My life reached a low point in the late 1970's when my physical condition limited my activities, and I did not have a great deal, which seemed worthwhile, to do with my time. With the help of different young men I was able to attend many of the sports activities at the local high school, but I could not become actively involved, as I once had been.

In 1979 and 1980 two events took place which put much needed meaning back into my life. The first event occurred when the Spencer-Van Etten administrator came and asked me to serve as a member of the School Committee on the Handicapped, a state mandated committee. With the exception of a parent (also mandated by law), I was the only non-professional member of the committee. The committee members were very understanding and quite helpful. Meetings were always held in the Van Etten School building for my convenience.

The school administrator and school board members felt that because of my disability and the experiences that I had gone through, I might have a different perspective to add to the decisions which must be made when formulating educational programs for children with handicapping conditions.

At first I was timid and had to gain understanding of the workings of the committee. I read as much of the information about the guidelines set forth by the New York State Education Department as I could so that I might be up to date in expressing my opinion on important issues. Over the nine years that I have been a member of that school committee, I have made my views known and hopefully I have helped to strengthen the programs for the handicapped in Spencer and Van Etten. I have always considered it an honor to be asked to

serve on the committee and to have had the opportunity to meet so many people who are dedicated to helping the handicapped.

In early 1980, several of us who were associated with handicapped people in one way or another formed an advocacy group in the areas of Van Etten, Spencer, Erin, Baldwin and Lockwood. In September of 1980 we met, elected our first set of officers and drew up by-laws for the group. We searched for a name for our group and, because we wanted a forward-sounding name, we called it Front Line.

The first officers were Sandy Swayze, President; I was Vice President; Betty Cundy was Secretary; and Doris Nelson was Treasurer. Two of us who were elected officers were handicapped, one was a parent and one a sister-in-law of a handicapped individual. Mrs. Swayze was the mother of a hearing impaired child. Mrs. Cundy was stricken with arthritis in the late 1970's and Mrs. Nelson's brother-in-law has cerebral palsy.

I became the organization's President and have served in that capacity since 1981. While the group has remained small in number, we still believe that we are serving the original purpose of Front Line.

The community has supported us very well indeed financially. Our annual walk-a-thon raises anywhere from $1500 to $2000 each year. Most of the participants in the eight mile walk are young people who seem to enjoy, not only walking, but also getting sponsors and collecting money for the group. We try to use our finances wisely and always for good purposes. We take the Special Education children of the Spencer-Van Etten School District on a bowling day and we have an annual Christmas party for the children and other handicapped people in the area. The party is held alternate years in Van Etten and Spencer in the local school buildings. In addition, in recent years we have made generous donations to United Cerebral Palsy House. This money has been used to purchase Christmas gifts for the residents of the House and one donation was used toward the purchase of a new bus. Front Line has become well known throughout the area and I am sure that we will always strive to help the handicapped in any way we can.

Life is constantly changing for each of us and, so, life took another turn for me in the mid 1980's. In 1983 I developed a severe pressure sore near my tailbone which quickly got out of hand. After spending five weeks in bed at home, I was advised to enter the Arnot Ogden Hospital in Elmira. Little did I know when I went to the hospital that I would be there for nearly three months. I spent Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Eve and Day in that hospital.

For the first four weeks I went to hydrotherapy in the whirlpool twice a day. I shall never forget Friday, November 18th, and the twenty-four hours that

followed. That was the day that I underwent surgery to repair the ulcer. I was not fearful of the surgery, but I did not anticipate the complications which developed during and after the surgery. I expected to be back in my room to spend the night following the surgery, however, I experienced a great deal of difficulty with my lungs during and after the surgery. I needed the assistance of a respirator for about twenty hours after the surgery and that was without a doubt the worst night I ever experienced. I became very uncomfortable due to the tube which was placed in my throat which prevented me from drinking any liquids or telling the nurses of my discomfort like being too warm or needing to turn over.

Needless to say, I did not get much sleep that night and I was glad to see dawn come. They began to slow down the respirator to see if I could breathe on my own. I showed good signs in that direction around noon, much to my relief. I did remain in intensive care until the following Tuesday due to the fact that my room had been taken by someone else and I had to wait for another bed to become available on my unit. On Tuesday I was returned to the unit and it was a great relief to be back among familiar nurses and aides who knew a little bit more about how to care for me.

For the next two months, which included the Christmas and New Year's holidays, I "enjoyed" my stay as much as anyone can "enjoy" a hospital confinement. Without any hesitation, I can say that the staff members at the Arnot Ogden Hospital treated me like royalty. They were very good to me and most of them seemed eager to try to keep my spirits up as well as to give me top care. Of course, I had my favorite girls who were extra nice and thoughtful to me. After I got home in January I wrote a letter to the "Elmira Star Gazette" stating what good care I had received at the hospital. I received a card signed by most of the staff on the unit telling me how much they appreciated my comments in the letter to the editor of the paper.

One of the reasons that my stay was prolonged was due to the fact that a small area in the incision did not heal. When Dr. Marshall spoke of having to take me back to the operating room to close the open spot, I got nervous because I did not want to get into the lung problems again.

Seeing my concern, Dr. Marshall agreed to do the minor surgery with a local anesthetic. I did not know what was going to happen but I really did not want to be put to sleep again. The doctor was willing to allow me to go home for Christmas Day and then come back, but I thought that would be too much for my father to handle.

After deciding not to go home for Christmas, I returned to the operating room where Dr. Marshall did the surgery on the small stubborn area which refused to heal properly. Dr. Marshall had agreed to try it under local anesthetic, but warned me that if he ran into any problems, he would put me under. I

remember the ordeal well, from start to finish. First of all, the good doctor entered the operating room area in his hunting attire. Then when I was on the operating table, he entered the room with a tape recorder of music whereupon I enjoyed the music during the entire operation. The operation took less than an hour from the time it started to the time I was back in my room.

Since Christmas and New Year's were spent in the hospital, everyone did what they could to make the holidays pleasant. Several of the nurses got me a Christmas stocking and filled it with small gifts. Dad came over and had dinner with me and several friends came by to try to make the day more pleasant. On January 13th I was allowed to go home and I was more than glad to get back into a more familiar environment.

The winter and spring months were spent convalescing and following the doctor's orders, which were to "get off your behind" as often as possible. The powers that be decided that Dad and I needed some help, so I started having home health care aides come in morning and evening. A section on my aides will be included in this book.

Many people can remember the date and time they became a Christian. They can also recall the event in their lives which led them to Christ. I really cannot pinpoint when I became saved. Although we were not avid church-goers in my youth, we all grew up together believing that there is a God and that he is the Lord and Savior in our lives.

My father had three brothers who were lay ministers and at least two nephews who became ordained ministers. While I knew all my uncles, there was one who was closest to Dad and he was a self taught lay minister. I feel that I knew him better than any of my other uncles and we spent a great deal of time together when Dad and I were visiting in West Virginia. Uncle Norman and his son, who is now a minister, taught me a great deal about the Lord and inspired me to put my faith in God. Other ministers who have served our church in Van Etten have encouraged me to become a Christian. For the past twenty years of my life I have put my trust in God and have tried to lead the type of life that He would want me to lead. I have had some real personal experiences with God and I trust that I am worthy of all the blessings that He has given me.

Two young ministers who really got me involved in the Van Etten Community United Methodist Church were William (Bill) Vallet and Joshua Lebelo, whom everyone calls "Josh".

Rev. Vallet came to the Van Etten charge in 1979 and it was but a matter of weeks before we were good friends. He soon had me involved as an active member of the church. Bill was always willing to go out of his way to help my father and me in any way he could. When it came time to appoint committees at

the yearly charge conference, Rev. Vallet always saw to it that I was appointed to two or three committees. Rev. Vallet left in June of 1983 and in his place came a delightful gentleman in the person of Rev. Joshua Lebelo.

Rev. Lebelo, or Josh as he became well known, was a young man from South Africa who had been in this country for two or three years. Josh was the first black man to serve our church, but his color in no way effected his acceptance in the church or the community. He had a very sharp wit and his personality was contagious. His personality and his dynamic speaking from the pulpit made him a favorite of all who knew him.

Not too many days went by that he did not stop at my home to say, "Hello" or to get into a discussion about church or almost anything else. He was a very dedicated man.

Josh also saw to it that I was included in many of his church activities. He was also very willing to transport Dad and me different places. He was always fun to be with. I shall never forget either Rev. Vallet or Rev. Lebelo.

Way back when I was in my early teens and forming my ideas about life and beginning to realize some of the problems I was going to face as a handicapped person, one of the first goals that came to my mind was to be accepted by my fellow man and my community. While I was in the rehabilitation center in Maryland, my mother wrote to a real estate agency for information on houses for sale in New York State. Neither she nor my father had ever been to the Southern Tier of New York. Somehow through the real estate agency they found Van Etten, New York, and purchased a home in the village of Van Etten. This is a community situated between Elmira and Ithaca and is about fifteen miles north of the Pennsylvania state border.

Back in the 1940's when my family first moved to Van Etten, it was a community with many people who had immigrated from Finland. Most of the Finnish people were farmers and the community was mostly agricultural, with many people also working in defense plants in Elmira and Ithaca during World War II. The Town of Van Etten has about twenty-one hundred people, with the village population being about six hundred.

I did not come to live in Van Etten until November of 1948, although I had spent vacation time there since 1942. Little did I know, upon my discharge from the rehabilitation center in October of 1948, how much the people of Van Etten would come to mean to me during the next forty years. I do not believe that there is a community which has ever accepted a severely handicapped person as readily as I have been accepted by the people of Van Etten. Every dream that I have ever had of being accepted had been more than fulfilled by this wonderful community.

A most important event in my life came about in 1982 which gave me some independence which I had not enjoyed for several years. A Home Service Representative for United Cerebral Palsy, who had helped me a great deal during the previous three years, came to my home to check on my standard wheelchair which was beginning to show signs of a great deal of wear and tear. I expressed a desire for a new, badly needed chair. The lady said that she would check with certain agencies on the possibility of getting a new chair and would get back to me.

In years gone by, I had thought many times when I saw someone in a motorized wheelchair, that I could operate one of these myself. In all of the years that I had been using my arms and hands I had never had the opportunity to try using a motorized chair. In addition, of course, the expense of such a chair had always been beyond my financial means.

Since losing the use of my arms I had never even thought about getting a motorized chair. I probably would have never even suggested that I try one. It was quite a shock to me when the Field Representative called one day and said that she had made an appointment for me to see an orthopedic specialist who might give approval for me to obtain a motorized chair. I recall giving her my answer as "Oh!" The lady, who is quite forceful with her tone of voice, but who does get things done, thought that I had said "No!" She quickly and precisely said, "Don't say no until after you have tried it." She said this as if she were scolding me. I anxiously indicated to her that I had every intention of keeping the appointment she had made for me. The doctor, a very young and understanding man, said that he thought that I could use a chair with a head control. Thus a new and exciting sense of anticipation filled my days.

Things do not always go as planned and a mix-up in paper work caused a one year delay before my new chair arrived. When it arrived in June of 1983 I was told to go over and try it out. Before the chair arrived, however, I had seen a picture in a United Cerebral Palsy publication of a young man with a chin control chair. The original plan was to get me a head control. I had suggested to the franchise dealer and to the doctor that I believed that I could use a chin control much more easily, so that approach was agreed to by all parties involved.

The chin control which came with the chair was set up to operate by pushing the control stick forward to go forward and backwards to go backwards. After bumping into chairs, tables and making holes in the walls, I began to analyze the situation myself. I decided that I could operate the chair more smoothly and confidently if the controls were reversed and the chair moved forward if I pulled backwards. A technician from the company which made the control was present through all of my trials and errors. I asked the gentleman if the controls could be reversed, and much to my relief, he said that they could.

He then turned the control around to see what I could do with that. The problem then was that right was left and left was right.

I was asked to bring the chair through the door and down the driveway where I was trying out the chair. Much to the surprise of everyone, I maneuvered the chair in quite an expert fashion. I can assure you that no one was more astonished about this than I and I was quite proud of myself, too. After seeing me operate the chair with the controls as I had suggested, the technician told me that he would have to take the chair back to the factory in New Jersey to have the right-left signals reversed. This would mean another delay of a few weeks until I could have the chair.

In early August I was asked to go back again to try the chair and to get the final approval from the doctor stating that the chair was suitable for me to bring home. We again tried the chair and I was finally allowed to bring it home. Now my new independence had begun. I soon learned how to operate it on my own on the sidewalks of Van Etten and all of my friends and neighbors were almost as delighted as I was that I had this wonderful new form of freedom. My dear father has always been very protective and concerned for my safety but he is also very proud that I can be on my own so much.

A new facility for Cerebral Palsied people opened in nearby Horseheads, New York, in February of 1984. I was invited by the Cerebral Palsy officials to attend a day program at the new center which was named United Cerebral Palsy House. I started attending in July of 1984 when a U.C.P. bus came each day to pick me up in the morning and bring me home each afternoon.

U.C.P. House is an up-to-date, modern facility where thirty-five severely handicapped people reside on a permanent basis. Between twenty and twenty-five adult handicapped people come in from the surrounding area each day by public and private transportation. The clients who reside at U.C.P. House are multiply handicapped. These people have not only physical problems, but there are also those who are profoundly mentally handicapped as well.

The staff at U.C.P. House is well trained to care for and treat each handicapped individual. Knowledge of handicapped people is a must for each employee at the House. The majority of the residents each has his or her own room which is always very neatly kept by the staff. There are three residential units which each has at least two staff people on duty all the time.

For the day program the clients are divided into groups with each group consisting of individuals selected on the basis of their level of achievement. Two staff members are assigned to each group. Physical therapy, occupational therapy and recreation are offered each day and the residents are taken to various community functions, shopping tours and so forth on a regular basis.

One of the few noticeable drawbacks at U.C.P. House is the constant change of personnel. In the four years during which I have been attending U.C.P. House, only a few employees are remaining who were there when I started attending. One of the major reasons for the constant change in personnel is the very low wage scale.

My experiences at U.C.P. House have been very positive, although the program is fairly restricted for me because of my physical limitations. It does, however, provide me with services which would be much more difficult to get at home. I have been enjoying my tenure at U.C.P. House and have made many new friends during my four years there. In some ways I have tried to be an advocate and I believe that, on the whole, the staff accepts my views on certain issues and, in fact, even welcomes them.

If and when the time comes that I must make a change in my residential living, I believe that I would feel quite comfortable if I could get into the U.C.P. House. Adjustments would have to be made, but I believe that such adjustments would be easy to make in surroundings with which I have been familiar for four years. Discussions about the possibility of me living at U.C.P. House have occurred and this may, in fact, occur at some time in the future.

I have purposely avoided naming too many names in this book for fear of leaving out someone or a group of people who have meant so much to me. Just about everyone in Van Etten with whom I have been associated has done meaningful things for me. I would never want to leave out anyone who has contributed to making my life easier and happier. I was accepted by my fellow students while attending high school and I am sure that the young people were a big factor in helping the older people to understand me so well. The people of Van Etten are to be commended for the understanding, patience and brotherly love that they have shown to me over the many years I have lived in their community. To every person in that community whom I have known during the last forty years, I say a heartfelt "THANK YOU!" and I salute you all.

Each of us thinks about the future from time to time and as we grow older, those thoughts come more frequently. For those of us who are handicapped, the question "What does the future hold?" is a lifelong question which really only time can answer.

At this stage of my life I do not know what the future will bring. Right now my father and I are still together in our own home but Dad is getting older and we do not know how much longer we will be able to stay together. Dad and I are together because we have Home Health Aides come in daily to assist in getting me up in the morning and into bed at night. They also assist with light housework and all of this makes it possible for Dad and me to remain independent.

It has been suggested that my name be added to the list of potential U.C.P. House residents and I have allowed my name to be placed on that list. I am sure that, if I remain on earth longer than Dad, a residential placement is in my future. I have not seen my brother in thirty-five years, nor have I heard from him in about ten years. My sister is occupied in the foreign service for the United States government. Even if a place with my brother or sister were available I could not, in all honesty, expect them to assume the responsibility of caring for me.

I would only hope that in any future placement, that I could still enjoy some of the independence I have been able to have in Van Etten.

My memories of my childhood and of my family are fond and I have a deep respect for my parents and siblings. The love, care and deep concern for me from every member of my family contributed greatly to the person I am today.

We were a typical West Virginia, rural family and in many ways that description is unique. West Virginians have a lifestyle of their own which is unique in American Society. The people of the mountain states, even today, do not seem to be in any hurry and take life in a very homespun manner. The people were, and still are, a very friendly and neighborly people who always have the door open and urge you to make friends with everyone. When they say, "Ya'll come back now, y' hear?" they mean precisely what they say.

We were as rural as they come. During the first twelve years of my life we lived on a farm and did what farm people did. Dad did not own a car, so going to and fro was not the thing we did. Back in those days, to go on a fifteen or twenty mile trip was thought to be a long trip. My grandparents from both my mother's and father's sides lived only about twelve miles from where we lived and we thought when we were to go visit them we were going on quite a journey. We visited our grandparents about twice a year and it was quite a treat for us to see them. My grandparents also lived on a farm and could not get away from the farm chores very often, and they came to see us about twice a year. Our biggest source of entertainment was family gatherings and the sound of the radio.

The children of my childhood days made their own entertainment. In the summertime, the main entertainment was to go fishing in the Greenbrier River; in the wintertime sledding down hill, usually on homemade sleds. I did not participate in all of these activities, but there were times when I went to the riverbank and did some fishing. During the summer of 1940 my parents bought me a red wagon and that was my means of going about the farm. My brother, Grey, and Dad would take me to the different places where work was being done; the hayfield, the garden and the barn. Now and then I would go to a combination store and Post Office which was located better than a mile from my home. I was never

denied, in any way, the opportunity to be very much a part of the family activities and work.

Our family was a very caring family for each other, but we weren't a family to say, "I love you," very often, nor were there a lot of kisses or hugs. I have always, in my adulthood, felt that we missed something by not being more expressive with our love for each other. Remembering back, however, the outward expression of love was not done by any of our relatives to a great degree.

The saying, "He is the greatest father on earth" truly fits my father. From the depths of my heart I do not believe that there is another father who ever gave more of his life to his son than Dad has given to me. He has devoted nearly sixty years of this life to me, forty of those years have been spent without my mother who passed away in 1948 when I was nineteen years old. The years of my life have not been easy for Dad. Not once have I ever heard him say that taking care of me and being responsible for my care was too much for him to endure. Until about ten years ago he was one of the hardest working men who ever lived. He was a farmer, an electrician, a plumber, a painter and he did just about everything a laborer would ever do. All of this work was not done with modern day equipment; most was done with the legs, arms, hands and back. After my mother passed away and my sister and brother were married and moved away, Dad would come home from work and prepare meals and take care of me. I was usually able to stay home alone during his working hours and I could maneuver about the house in my wheelchair.

Up until about six or seven years ago, before we started getting home health aides to come into our home to assist me, Dad would take care of all of my physical needs and would physically lift me from my wheelchair to wherever I had to be. He would put me in and get me out of bed manually.

God has been very good to Dad, for he never was ill or needed any surgery until he was sixty-four years old and had to have open heart surgery. Dad was never a big man but he was durable and strong.

Although he has had a broken leg and a mild stroke in the last four years, he still insists on helping me as much as he can. A more devoted father never lived.

My mother was a devoted person to her family, but I must admit that I did not know my mother as an adult because she passed away when I was nineteen years old. I spent a total of about a year and a half with my mother during the last six years of her life. I have stated early in this book that I started my rehabilitation program at the age of thirteen, spending three years of my life in one rehabilitation center and two and a half years in another center. I would come home for short vacations in the summertime and at Christmas time, but

those times did not allow me to truly know my mother during those growing up years.

Mother was a woman with strong convictions and a mother who strived to instill high values in her children. She was like Dad in a way and I do not ever recall her complaining or even thinking that I was a burden in any way. During my first thirteen years of life Mom took care of my every need during the time that Dad was working, which was, of course, every day. She was a mother, a teacher and a friend to me all wrapped up in one person. She always corrected and disciplined me when the need arose.

Mother tried to make life enjoyable for me. On special occasions, such as my birthday, Mother always made my favorite cake and cooked my favorite foods. I recall many times when she would tell me a great deal about her childhood days and we enjoyed each other very much. Mom probably catered to me to some degree, but I do not feel as if she treated me a great deal differently from my brother and sister.

Mother was a hard working lady, devoting most of her time to her family and home. In addition to her working in the house, she took care of some of the farm animals, milking the cow and taking care of her flock of chickens and in the summer she spent many hours working in the garden. Back in the '30's she put up many jars of fruits and vegetables in the summertime so that we could eat well in the winter. In those days people did not go to the store every day. It was a weekly event for Mother to cook most of the day on Saturday, baking breads, cakes and pies. She prepared three hearty meals a day and the majority of those meals were made from "scratch." I believe in the old saying, "No one cooks like my mother did."

Had mother lived longer into my adult years, I am sure that we would have had a good and interesting life together and certainly life would have been more enjoyable and easier for Dad and me. I have missed her a great deal since she left us and I certainly will remember her until my time is up on earth.

The relationships that I have had with my brother, Grey, and my sister, Hilda, have been entirely different. As kids we had a normal childhood together, but we were only together until our early teens. During our early childhood we did many things together and I was never left out of our activities. If I could not participate, I was almost always there to enjoy watching. We lived on the banks of a good fishing river and each summer, fishing was one of the favorite pastimes. I did not go fishing all the time with my brother and sister, but there were times when I did go to the river and fish from the bank or bridges.

Three months after my brother's sixteenth birthday, when I was in the rehabilitation center in Maryland, he joined the Navy and quite frankly, we have

not seen a lot of each other since. The last time we saw my brother was in California in 1955 and as of this date in 1989 we have not heard from him in nearly ten years.

It is my brother's choice not to be seen or heard from and it hurts to know that he does not want to be close to us. Neither Dad nor I know where he is and efforts to locate him in the last year have proven unsuccessful.

My sister has kept in contact throughout her lifetime and she is more than willing to help us in all of our needs. She went through a divorce in the early 1980's and joined the Foreign Service of the United States Government and since 1986 she has worked in Moscow, Russia and Brussels, Belgium. She is presently assigned to work in Brussels.

I have two nieces and two nephews who are all adults, but I only know where one nephew is located. My sister's son, Kyle, is doing quite well for himself and is living in Tokyo, Japan, where he married a Japanese girl and they have two children.

I wish that my father, brother, sister and I could have spent our lifetimes in a much closer way, for life would have been much more meaningful for all four of us had our relationship been closer.

There have been so many, many people in my life to whom I owe a great debt which can never be paid in full. I can truthfully say that almost everyone in my life has contributed something which has made life more meaningful and easier, making me the person I am today.

I think of my family, my doctors and nurses, therapists, teachers and my many, many friends who have gone beyond the call of duty to add something special to my life. Groups of people and individuals, each in their own way, have done things for me which have made life more enjoyable.

One of the most difficult things about writing this autobiography is the fact that I have had to leave out the names of so many people to whom I owe so much. I have named some individuals, but these are only a fraction of the number of people who have meant so much to me. The main reason I have not attempted to name people is the fact that I may have forgotten the names of some people who were so very important to me in my early life and it would be impossible to trace their names. I certainly do want to apologize to the many people whom I have not mentioned in the book. I will always remember each one of you and your many deeds on my behalf will always be remembered and treasured. May God bless each of you!

There is one aspect of a physically handicapped person's life which I do not believe has ever been fully understood by laymen or experts who work with the severely handicapped as to the need the handicapped individuals has for love and affection.

The subject of love in regard to the handicapped, especially the severely handicapped person, has never been addressed either from lack of knowledge or from fear of becoming too involved by people who avoid the subject matter altogether.

Each of us was born with love to give and a desire to be loved. God created us with that need and desire to give and receive love from others.

Perhaps it is spiritually wrong for us to ask questions which cannot be intelligently and reasonably answered by an earthly human being and maybe it is not right to seek answers and solutions to problems which cannot be solved by mankind. However, we cannot help but wonder often times just why some of us are denied the love, physical love, that life itself is built upon, just because of broken bodies that we were born with or had thrust upon us by fate.

The broken bodies we speak of are the thousands of physically handicapped men and women who live on this earth and the empty hearts are the hearts that these people carry but which are filled with only loneliness and despair.

These people are not being denied love, and a fuller life, because of any resentment or any outright rejection by the physically normal population of this land. They are being denied this essential element of life due to several factors. We feel that misunderstanding, lack of knowledge and the type of society we all live in are the main drawbacks to this problem which faces the handicapped.

The fact that the severely handicapped person cannot earn his own money to support himself and a family is a big factor in denying the individuals the love and affection that they need and crave.

During my lifetime I have known two women who I was in love with and who cared enough for me so that we talked about a future together. The question of supporting a wife was a big factor in keeping me from getting married.

In my opinion the average person must learn to accept the handicapped person as a whole person and fully realize that love and affection are essential elements in everyone's life.

A very important part of my life occurred in the last few years. Because of my deteriorating physical condition and because of Dad's age and his health, we had to think about getting some help in our home in the early 1980's to assist with my overall care. We turned to the United Cerebral Palsy Association and State and County Assistance Programs to apply for Home Health Care.

The Home Health Aides have been a means of keeping Dad and I together which has been an important aspect of our lives. Without these people we would not be able to be together at this time. The Aides, who come at different hours of the day and night, take care of my personal needs and do most of the household chores. They also prepare meals. To say the least, the Aides are a challenge for Dad and I and we in turn create a challenge for them. Because of the nature of the work and the low income that the Agencies give them, there is a tremendous turnover of personnel. The turnover does cause some problems from time to time and because of different personalities, some changes have had to be requested by Dad and I and by the Aides themselves. Adjustments have to be made by both parties involved every now and then but, overall, these are a fine dedicated group of people.

Several of these Home Health Aides have become very close to Dad and I and we feel that they are part of the family. It is very often sad when they decide to change jobs or leave for personal reasons. They often go beyond their call of duty and bring things for us which help to make life more enjoyable. There have been some ladies who have been with me for more than a few months and in fact two or three have been coming for a few years.

Some of the Aides have shared much of their lives with me as well as listening to the stories of my life. Some of them have told me that I have helped them or inspired them in many ways. If I have helped them or inspired them in any way, it does not compare with the many, many ways they have helped and encouraged me.

I am grateful for all the friendships I have made through the Home Health Care Agencies and I salute them for the fine work that they do.

This autobiography was completed in 1989 but due to circumstances beyond the author's control, publishing of the book had to be delayed.

In March of 1992 I became very ill. The following three months was the worst period of my life time. In fact, the last three years have been the most difficult years I have spent on earth.

The three months I was hospitalized I was close to death with a respiratory ailment. Upon my discharge in June, my doctor told some of my

close friends he did not expect me to live more than six months. This is 1995 and I am still living.

About a month after I entered the hospital, the doctor advised me that I had to be put on a respirator. The doctor told me he did not know the cause of my illness, but I could not breathe on my own.

My condition has improved to where I can be off the vent for several hours a day. This allows me to go outside of my home and go on short trips. We have to take a portable suction machine when I go out of town so I can be suctioned occasionally.

Two of the worst blows in my life occurred in April of 1992. The trachea that had to be inserted in my throat prevents me from talking which causes me a great deal of trouble in communication.

I have been home since June of 1992 and I have had 24-hour nursing care. Most of my nurses have been very helpful and quite patient with me. I am very grateful to them for their excellent care.

The nurses have had some difficulties in communicating with me. I am sure I get frustrated with my inability to talk and tell them my needs and wants. All in all, things have gone quite well since I have been home.

Another tragedy occurred to me and my family when Dad passed away on April 26, 1992. My father died in the same hospital where I was a patient. He had been in failing health for several months before his death.

Dad and I loved each other very much even though we did not speak of our love for each other very often.

My father's passing created a void in my life that will never never be filled. I miss him so very much, but I know we will meet again in heaven.

Another wonderful person came into my life about six years ago. Doris Nelson answered my need when I asked her to become my power of attorney. Doris takes care of all my financial business and my personal matters. Without her help, I don't know how I would manage.

Please let me mention another couple who deserve a lot of credit in the lives of Dad and I. Janice and Arnold Holmes have been very close friends for 42 years. If my father and I needed any help in any way, Janice and Arnold were there for us.

They took us on many vacations and they did many everyday things which made life easier for both of us.

The Holmes have moved to North Carolina and that has been a big loss to me.

Many things have happened in the last three years that I have omitted because it is very hard for me to put those events in detail. Only those who cannot speak know what a hardship this is.

I know I have left out names of many people who have helped out in many ways during the worst crisis in my life. It would be impossible for me to remember all those names of the hospital personnel who did so much for me. I hope they will understand.

No matter who we are or what handicap and problem we endure, we have to make the best of what we have. We cannot say, "What might have been," or, "I wish I had my life to live over again," because life goes on.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this Autobiography to the many, many people who have contributed to my life.

It is their dedication to me which helped me enjoy the success that I have achieved.

I have mentioned individuals and groups of people who have dedicated their time and energy toward helping me find a place in the normal world.

I especially dedicate this book to my father, mother, brother and sister, and to the people of the Community of Van Etten where I have lived for 47 years.

The following names are family and relatives who have contributed to my life in many ways.

Lawrence D. Alderman - Father
Madge Alderman - Mother
Grey Alderman - brother
Hilda Alderman Murphy - sister
Kyle Murphy - nephew
Setsuko Murphy - niece
Alyssa Murphy - niece
Scott Murphy - nephew
George Alderman - Grandfather
Nevada Alderman - Grandmother
Norman Alderman - uncle
Olive Alderman - aunt
Ulric Alderman - uncle
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Neil Alderman - uncle
Theodore Alderman - uncle
Ruby Hill - aunt
Euln Underwood - aunt
Edith Dean - aunt
Norman Lee Alderman - cousin
Keith Alderman - cousin
Florence Ramsey - Grandmother
Hallie Perkins - aunt
Ernest Ramsey - uncle
Betty Jo Buly - cousin
Mary Lou Smith - cousin

The following names are friends, teachers, therapists, doctors and other acquaintances who have contributed to my life in many ways. Without these people I am sure most of the things I have achieved would not have been possible.

If I have omitted anyone who have been in my life in any way, please accept my heartfelt and sincere regrets for not including your name.

Adamack, Alberta
Adams, Bob
Ahart, Glenn
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Benjamin, Jack
Benjamin, Jim
Benjamin, Robert
Benjamin, Russell
Benjamin, Terry
Benjamin, William
Bennett, Leigh
Benton, Helen
Bergberm, Betty Belle
Berman, Billie Geller
Bilbo, Joe
Blakman, Richard
Bogart, Charles
Bowen, Robert
Bowen, Ruth
Briggs, Ed
Brooks, Helen
Brown, Addison
Brown, Colleen
Brown, Rev. Les
Buckley, John Family
Buell, Ray
Burnette, Ruth
Burvee, Nick
Burvee, Sandra
Bush, Brian
Caffery, John
Campbell, Molly Jo
Capawana, Anne
Cary, Dick
Cerio, Judy R.
Chilson, Robin
Chisom, Vickie
Church, Naomi
Collins, William
Collson, Earl
Compton, Nancy
Cook, Louise
Crance, Kathy
Crew, Fran
Cronkhite, Jim
Cundy, Betty
Cundy, Eileen
Cundy, Jack
Davenport, Beverly
DeYoung, Ben
Dillingham, Elizabeth
Dilworth, Elizabeth
Doane, Joe
Doane, Mary
Doane, Tim
Donahue, Jerry
Doty, Tim
Draughtery, Betsy
Dunham, Joy
Dunlop, Deanna
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Emm, Mary
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Harris, Mike
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King, Martha
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Kozerski, Brian
Kraus, Ann Marie
Kretschmer, Paul
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Lansky, Buddy
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Larison, Ruth
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Leonard, Arlis
Leonard, George
Leonard, Kevin
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Liquori, Laura
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Lucas, Donald
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Mallula, Isaac
Manley, Jerry
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Marchase, Vivian
Marshall, Dr. James
Mary, Lilly
Masin, Helen
Matejka, Joseph
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McDowell, Arlo
McNamara, David
McWhorter, Ruth
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Miller, Ray
Miller, Rev. Donald
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Moulthrop, Deborah
Murtaugh, Mable
Nailor, Deborah
Nary, Dot
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Nelson, George
Nichols, Betty
Nixdorf, Ann
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Noteboom, Brian
Nutt, Jane
Nybeck, Pauline
Oakley, Rhonda
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Osborn, Donna
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Palmer, Robert
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Tiable, Roy
Townsand, Autumn
Ucci, Joe
Vallet, Rev. William
VanHouten, Jolee
VanRiper, Jean
Vargo, William
Veasey, Bill
Veasey, Bob
Veasey, Tom
Walle, Sue
Walls, Sue
Walpole, Benjamin
Wandricke, Sue
Wanser, Evelyn
Warren, Dora Lou
Warren, Henry Family
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Webster, Phyllis
Welch, Norma
Whitney, Sonny
Willis, Michelle
Wingard, Paul
Woodard, Christie
Woodard, Lynn
Yeier, Eudora
Young, Nora
Zoltowski, Paul

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